

INTERTEXTUALITY AND IDENTITY
An Examination of Dramaturgy for Dance Through
The Remounting Process

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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTERS OF FINE ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN DANCE
YORK UNIVERSITY
TORONTO, ONTARIO

April 2014

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Abstract

This research thesis focuses on remounting existing dance choreographies. It reveals a shift from traditional notions of the choreographer as a figure of centralized authority to a decentralized model of collaborative exploration. Questions raised throughout this investigation are: How are the outcomes of choreographic remounting affected by defining the place of imitation in the process? How can the artist's creative voice remain present and active in the context of executing already established choreography? What is the place of the dancer's adaptive choices, and how do they manifest in the remounting process and subsequent performance of the work? Three phases are identified in order to contextualize these questions within the remounting process. The three phases are: Mimesis, Embodiment and Interpretation. The theoretical framework for this study comes from dance and performance studies, using references from Mark Franko, Bojana Cvejic, and William Forsythe.

Dedication

To David Gerald Ottmann and Enfys Mon Williams-Ottmann who both encouraged me to invest in my talents and supported every pli   and each tendu.

I make a special dedication to Martine Lusignan who is a marvel of openness, generosity, fastidiousness, integrity, steadfastness, humour, creativity, and love. Martine, you are a constant source of inspiration—on the day I met you, today, every day in between and on into our future, la nuit et le soir.

Last but not at all least, I dedicate this to Morgane, whose life-long learning has begun so beautifully and whose creative voice sings to my ears and inspires my every waking breath.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the culmination of three years of study and research, and actually much more. The journey has been informed, supported and inspired by a host of people who offered invaluable insights, experience, ideas and the generosity of their time. I wish to acknowledge and thank the following people who have significantly impacted my work and research to leave an indelible mark on me: Carol Anderson, Megan Andrews, Jennifer Bolt, Pat Bradley, Darcey Callison, Justine Comfort, Robert Glumbek, Ziyian Kwan, Martine Lusignan, William Mackwood, Selma Odom, Holly Small, and Claire Wootten. Last but not least, I acknowledge and thank Grant Strate who had the vision to pioneer the York University dance department, and who taught me not to fear the artistic fraud police, but rather to fearlessly pursue my vision.

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1.1 Historical Overview

Historically, and following the views of Gabriele Klein and Sandra Noeth, dramaturgy has been associated with theatre. However dramaturgy has also been applied to other mediums such as dance. Traditional approaches to dramaturgy view the dramaturg as the first observer as well as the objective observer who facilitates structuring the physical, intellectual and other elements related to the performance work (252). The first dramaturgical principles for what became known as *ballet d'action* were written by Jean-George Noverres in 1760. Considered the grandfather of ballet as we know it today, Noverres' *ballet d'action* prioritized the body of the dancer as the conduit for expression. Bojana Cvejic, Mark Franko and Jonathan Burrows are among the contemporary figures researching dramaturgy and intertextuality, and whose work is continuing this lineage by contributing to the greater discussion of dance and dramaturgy. They identify the inherent intertextuality of dance, performance and theatre as inspiration for further development of the practical application of dramaturgy in various performance disciplines.

In the course of my dramaturgical research thesis I identify three progressions of adaptation influencing the process of restaging dances: mimesis, embodiment and interpretation. I refer to these progressions as the three phases of assimilation. In the following pages, I will elaborate on the evolution of the phases in relation to the dance interpreters involved in three case studies.

1.2 Positioning

The research in this thesis considers applying dance dramaturgy to the work of remounting dance choreography. In my own professional experience, I have seen choreographers avail themselves of a dramaturg as both first observer and objective observer in facilitating the framing and content development of their work in the creation process. I believe subsequent performances benefit from the open dialogue and collaboration initiated through the dramaturg. I have also witnessed and participated in countless remounting projects. Over time I have observed an evolution of the hierarchic role of the choreographer from dictator and overseer to that of dynamic collaborative voice, mentor and producer.

Thus, my interest in and inspiration for investigating the field of dramaturgy is the result of experiences in my own career, which spans three decades. As a performing artist I have been a member of repertory dance companies and Canadian contemporary dance companies including The National Ballet of Canada, Ballet British Columbia, Montreal-based Fortier Dance Creations, Vancouver-based Mascall Dance, and Vancouver's Holy Body Tattoo, and have performed in countless choreographer-based projects like those of Benoît Lachambre and Paul-André Fortier. My career in dance has also encompassed performing and choreographing as well as teaching, mentoring, coaching and rehearsal directing student and professional dancers from a broad array of organizations including dance schools, universities, colleges, and professional performing companies such as Montreal-based companies La La La Human Steps, Les Grands Ballet Canadiens, BJM Danse, O`Vertigo Danse Inc, Compagnie Marie

Chouinard, Toronto-based Compagnie Coleman Lemieux, Toronto Dance Theatre and ProArteDanza, Quinte Ballet School of Canada, Vancouver's Simon Fraser University, and York University, Toronto.

Over the course of these varied engagements I have been involved in numerous remounted and reconstructed works. One of the most notable is James Kudelka's *15 Heterosexual Duets*, originally created on the dancers of Toronto Dance Theatre in 1991. I was one of the cast members of the first and second remounts of this work in 1997 and 1999, and subsequently a rehearsal director for the third and fourth remount processes, which took place in Montreal in 2006 and then Toronto in 2011. This and other remounting processes have given me an interesting vantage point from which to comment. The Montreal project was invested in as a serious contribution to Canadian dance heritage. It was featured at the 2006 Canada Dance Festival, and Canada's dedicated dance publisher Dance Collection Danse published a book chronicling the process. During the remount project, I observed with interest the manner in which different dancers navigated the process of understanding the work, their approaches to reading of the dance text, and finally their interpretation of it. Later, for my contribution to the book, I wrote: "Seeing the dancers enter that state of being totally engaged in mind and body, committed to each moment, fully embodying the essence of the piece through each physical task, wrapped in each other and in the work—the movement, the music, the rhythm, the relationship felt and experienced...." (Ottmann 46).

1.3 Questions of the Research

Reflecting on the experiences of remounting processes, I find interesting points of departure for looking at this aspect of dance in relation to choreography, and am led

to three primary questions: 1) Will the outcomes of a choreography be positively affected by attempting to define the place of imitation in the creative remounting process? 2) What is the place of the dancer's adaptive choices and how do these choices manifest in the re-mounting process with a new cast of dancers and in the subsequent performance of the work? 3) How can the artist's creative voice remain present and active in the context of executing an already established work? In response to the second question specifically, choreographer and author Senta Driver provides pertinent discussion of William Forsythe's use of classical technique as a practical language that affects how the dancer views, receives and processes the dance material and through it transmits their voice: "...dancers in outside companies who are cast in Forsythe pieces look like different artists in his work. They visibly know what a depth of information lies behind their movement." (Driver 65)

1.4 Themes and Concepts

My observations, informed by professional experience as a dancer, teacher and choreographer, lead me to ponder those research questions as they relate to three separate case studies described in this paper. The dance choreographies of my thesis case studies are made up of codified movement often referred to as movement vocabulary. In this sense choreography can be discussed as a dance text (Franko 15), therefore the terms "text" and "choreography" will be used interchangeably. Additionally, Intertextuality can also be discussed in a context of the collaborative interplay occurring between the artists involved. This dialogue is a liminal space where the intersecting voices meet. Moreover, as a result of my practical experience with this type of dialogue,

I identify three phases that occur in the remounting and/or reconstruction process, namely: mimesis, embodiment and interpretation.

In the case studies for this thesis, I observe a progression from imitation or mimesis through embodiment in other words, when a dancer adopts essential aesthetic qualities intended by the choreographer and moves toward a personalized interpretation of these aesthetics in performance of the choreography. In addition to the three phases I identify the following themes: 1) The intertextual nature of reconstruction and remounting of dance choreographies; 2) Adaptation as a means to achieve embodiment; 3) The identity and voice of the choreographer and collaborators exercised within the intertextual context of remounting work.

Intertextuality means to intermingle while weaving. According to authors Tim McLaughlin, Christopher Keep, and Robin Parmar, intertextuality is a term derived from the Latin *intertexto*. Intertextuality was introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin and later conceptualized in the 1960s by French semiotician Julia Kristeva, and further developed by Umberto Eco (Fabio Caiani 67). Although first conceived of as a literary term, intertextuality has since been applied in other contexts and has a place in discussing all creative mediums including dance. In dance studies, Mark Franko references Umberto Eco in defining postmodernism in relation to intertextuality to draw a parallel between dance and literature, saying that “postmodernism is a trend not to be chronologically defined, but rather, an ideal category –or, better still, a *Kunstwollen*, a way of operating. We could say that every period has its own postmodernism.” (135).

A brief overview of terminology applied in the discussion of re-presenting pre-existing choreography is appropriate in order to contextualize my use of terms. A

remount refers to staging of an established performance piece again or anew. In my experience it contains an inevitable amount of adaptation of the original work which personalizes the choreography onto the new body(s) and results in preserving the essence of the piece.

A reconstruction is the replication of something based on available evidence; putting a dance piece back together from existing components or remains. I feel there is a nuanced difference between these terms in that remount implies repetition of an idea or essence of a work whereas reconstruction implies replication of the original. The term 'reconstruction' has been used in many contexts to mean different things. For example Sali Ann Kriegsman, director of the National Endowment of the Arts dance program uses the term in reference to the preservation of dance heritage (Gitelman 4); Choreographer, dance dramaturg and scholar, Mark Franko, discusses the tradition of dance reconstruction focused on replicating historical dances with consideration of the original ideological and socio-political context; and *RECONSTRUCTING/LA REPRISE DE FIFTEEN HETEROSEXUAL DUETS BY/DE James Kudelka* uses the term in the context of a contemporary re-staging of the choreography. In my experience, the term reconstruction is used most often to refer to historical reproductions and the term remounting applying to contemporary re-staging of dance repertoire. Regardless of the nuances between these terms, I do feel that it is important to consider the many changed elements for the new dance remount such as place, present politics and aesthetics, and the individual persons in the new version who have a distinct impact on the outcome of a re-staged work. Therefore, I agree with Franko when he contests dance reconstruction theory which treats choreography as a

retrievable text which can be relied upon solely to successfully re-stage dances. In Franko's view, this results in mechanical reproduction achieving "literal accuracy [...] devoid of true theatricality" because the text itself is only a partial representation of the original which cannot consider all of the factors influencing the outcome of reconstruction (12). This line of thinking supports my view that the three phases of assimilation are relevant concepts to facilitate the dramaturg's work of achieving the goal of an authentic representation of the essence of a work beyond replication.

Franko adds another term into the dialogue, 'construction', which he feels represents the act of reproducing a dance so it is "theatrically experienced as unique in the contemporary moment while still purveying historicalness" (13) and not a mere replication. As I wrestle with the definitions and appropriate applications of the terms remount, reconstruction and construction, I find it appropriate to apply the term most used in contemporary contexts in the dance field. In my experience in professional dance circles, 'remount' is the common vernacular applied to the process of preparing existing choreography for re-staging. All of my three case studies present choreography from the recent past and take place in professional contexts. Therefore, being contemporary processes, I apply the term 'remount' to the three case studies.

Adaptation is another concept that I incorporate in this thesis and is often applied to the work of retelling stories through another medium, such as from literature to dance in William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, by John Cranko, or to cinema by Franco Zeffirelli. Choreographers have long used works of visual art, literature, music, film and other mediums as inspiration for their work. Adaptation also means the process of alteration to fit some purpose or situation, as in a dancer altering an aspect of a

movement in order to embody the essence. I apply the term 'adaptation' in this latter sense in particular when discussing the embodiment phase in reference to alterations made by the dancers in order to transpose the text onto their bodies.

Furthermore, the discussion of imitation and creation is applicable to dramaturgy and remounting choreography. Dramaturgy facilitates the intertextual dialogue of materials intersecting in choreography while the artist's individual voice communicates the distillation of their reading of the text. In other words, the inevitable deposit of the individual is manifest and filtered through experience and channeled into form. This is a personal act by the dancer to infuse their voice into the work.

Is every personal act original? Is everything original, novel? As pointed out by Michael Worton and Judith Still, these questions were originally raised by Aristotle (4) and are revisited in the context of dance by Franko. Regarding the concept of originality, following the dramaturgical work, is the work novel as a 'first' or novel as a result of the added dramaturgical experience? How does the dramaturg's voice in the remounted work contribute to the idea of originality? In order to conceptualize this question, we need to understand choreography as a text first to identify what is original.

Choreography is often referred to as a text as in the title of Franko's book, *Dance as Text: Ideologies of the Baroque Body*. He describes the historic evolution of dance from movement accompanied by spoken narrative to the Baroque period where movement is interpreted through a written libretto but without speech. Franko points to this as the moment at which dance moves beyond simple aesthetics to adhere to a strong ideological and political framework. I draw upon Franko's idea of seeing choreography as a text, and I go beyond the aesthetic perspective of choreography to

view dance as ingrained with meaning based in the intention, ideas and background of the choreographer and the dancers. Therefore, as a dramaturg, I see dance text as a result of the interweaving of my own background with that of the dancers and the choreographer. Because of this I pose the question: how does the dramaturg's voice participate in the notion of novelty? Thus, the concept of originality is framed by the definition of postmodernism and intertextuality provided above.

My own intertextual dance background references many sources of contemporary ballet aesthetics, such as John Cranko, Jiří Kylián, James Kudelka and William Forsythe. I perceive that many present day choreographers of contemporary ballet also have histories influenced by others referencing very similar aesthetics. My recognition of these references, such as in the choreography of *Shifting Silence*, enable me to feel confident with the text, direct the dancer's execution of the choreography, and comment on the dancer's interpretation of the movement.

1.5 Methodology

The research for this MFA dissertation is primarily qualitative in nature. My research is predominantly based on studio practice and theatrical performance, reiterating the idea that embodied knowledge is transmitted through practice. However, the fact that I have selected three case studies also provides the opportunity for some comparative analysis. The research for this thesis is centered on the process of remounting existing choreography through three case studies. In contrast to historical reconstructions such as Nijinsky's *Le sacre du printemps*, documented by Millicent Hodson, which rely primarily on historical and archival resources, my research is geared primarily to practice intertwined with some archival research. The archival resources I

avail myself of are DVD recordings of the original choreography as well as the embodied knowledge of choreographers, rehearsal directors and original cast members. All three case studies share the common element that they are contemporary works performed within the past dozen years with all original participants still living, which means that the embodied knowledge of the choreographic work is still accessible. Although the topic of dramaturgy is the same in the three cases, the parameters for each are unique.

The research analysis begins with the remounting and reconstruction of Case Study #1: *Flesh and a Broken Whisper*, where I participated as choreographer and dramaturg. The work was remounted with dancer Justine Comfort as the interpreter in the studios of York University and performed in the McLean Performance Studio at York University. Then I present Case Study #2: *Shifting Silence*, in which I acted as dramaturg and rehearsal director. As previously stated, the dramaturg takes on the role of the first observer overseeing the drama of the text from a certain distance. In contrast, the rehearsal director's work is close to the action and intimately involved with the transmission of the text. The rehearsal process for *Shifting Silence* took place in the studios of Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre and was performed at the Fleck Theatre in Toronto, Ontario.

Finally, I participated as an observer for Case Study #3: *The Snow Scene* from *The Nutcracker*, which was rehearsed in the studios of The National Ballet of Canada and performed at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts in Toronto, Ontario. Further details for all three case studies are provided in Section 2 of this thesis. What results from my work is a compilation of information from dialogue with

choreographers, rehearsal director and dancers. I conceptualize the information through the lens of a dance dramaturgical process as the articulation of movement concepts and verbal transmission of ideas.

In continuation, I present the dramaturgy for the case studies, make observations and examine what transpired, and analyze the commonalities and differences in each process.

2. Case Studies

2.1 *Flesh and Broken Whisper* Case Study #1

If there is justice, this is it.
To die just as required, without excess.
To grow back just what's needed from what's left.

We, too, can divide ourselves, it's true.
But only into flesh and a broken whisper.
Into flesh and poetry.

Wisława Szymborska

The first case study revisits a piece of my own choreography, *Flesh and a Broken Whisper*. The process consists of reworking and remounting a piece which I first choreographed in 2001 in Vancouver. Thus, part of my methodology in this case study consists of relying on my own memory, and using my body as a living archive. The dance is inspired by the poem *Autotomy* by Nobel Prize winning poet Wisława Szymborska. The poem draws parallels between the effect of psycho-emotional suffering on human beings and the capacity of certain animals to sever a part of their body in order to escape threat. Collaborating with a single dancer, I let the physical tasks of the movement vocabulary inform the work and seek to apply emotionality judiciously and subtly in order to explore this heavy theme without overly dramatizing it.

The interpreter for the original version, Ziyian Kwan, is a contemporary dancer from Vancouver with a considerable profile as a solo performer as well as with local companies like Kokoro Dance, and EDAM. The music is an original composition by film and video composer Brian Carson, with whom I had previously worked with on two projects. The lighting design is by Jean-Philippe Trepannier, a designer with a reputation for his prolific designs for dance companies across Canada.

Much of the original documentation and materials were lost due to a flood, which poses a challenge for remounting, because there are no rehearsal notes, lighting documentation, costume design, performance programs, or recording of the music. The process of remounting in this case study relies on the DVD of two performance runs, my memory of the piece, and the present-day reflections of the original dancer of the piece.

The second challenge facing the remount is casting a dancer well suited to the work, since the original creative process is heavily influenced by the collaborating dancer's maturity, experience and enigmatic interpretation. As previously mentioned, the most important aspect of the piece is the subtle portrayal of emotional states juxtaposed by intense physicality and strong focus. After considering several possible casting options I approached a recent graduate of York University's Department of Dance, Justine Comfort, who presents as an introvert in my opinion, yet possesses dynamic physicality and strong technique. I felt these qualities would play well in the piece, and concurrently I felt that the qualities required for the piece would be a positive challenge for her artistic development.

Two other elements critical to the remount were music and lighting. The original for both were no longer available. Lighting designer William Mackwood offered his talents to produce a new lighting design for the piece. One idea from the original lighting concept that I remembered was that Jean-Phillipe specifically focused the light so it would not project onto the floor and thereby obscure any sense of time and place. I spoke with William about the technicalities involved in focusing light so it would catch the dancer even when lying on the floor but without lighting the floor itself. William is the consummate collaborator and generously shared his ideas about how to accomplish

what I had in mind. In addition, William offered a concept to enhance the essence of the piece. He proposed projecting stanzas of the poem onto the back curtain in strategic locations and times to complement the dancing. I welcomed his design idea as strong support to the concept of the piece.

The original music was a collage soundscape which included a treated version of Richard Strauss's *Morgen*. In its place I used Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 as the inspiration for the new version. The Symphony No. 7 has a repetitive theme and almost dirge-like quality that slowly develops. The music resonates with the concept for the piece which invokes a sense of measured and resolute journey in the face of a buffeting head-wind. I approached pianist and composer Erik Geddis to write a new composition for the piece informed by the iconic symphony. Erik worked with the symphony to inspire his composition, which included subtle references to Beethoven's score. The result provided a haunting tension which complemented the physical drama expressed by the choreography.

Although the original choreography is thirteen minutes in length, the performance limit imposed by the MFA concert of ten minutes required editing of the piece to reduce its duration. To begin the process, I watched the performance video to recall the choreography without Justine present. Later in rehearsal with Justine, I taught her the material for the opening section, giving her general information about the physical details. Once she learned the beginning section, I then played the video of the piece for Justine to see. In setting up this deliberate order of events, I felt I was acting as mentor. My concern was to put Justine in a learning environment where she felt confident to address the text and experience the movement in her own body before seeing it

performed by the original interpreter. Once she did view the DVD I deduced from her reaction that she was impressed by the performance. Further inquiry revealed that Justine questioned her own ability to interpret in an adequate manner to justify performing the role. Not wanting her doubt to linger, I directed her to pick up the next section of choreography in an effort to put focus on memorizing the text. The learning process continued in this way and I used the video sparingly as we progressed. My intention was to remove the use of the DVD as quickly as possible and the notion of imitating or achieving someone else's results to guide the Justine towards her own interpretation and experience of the piece and explore what she could bring to the work. I deliberately limited the amount of time spent in the imitation phase to ensure this young artist would continue to evolve through the process of navigating the other two phases.

An interesting part of the reconstruction process for me was the role my own memory played. I was surprised at how clearly I remembered certain details of the original rehearsal process. In that process, the intention for the movement vocabulary was at times different than the outcome of the choreographic process. This was due in large part to the interpretive qualities and talent unique to the original dancer. As I began creating the original piece with Ziyian, I observed that she made interpretive choices that were very personal and informed by the way she inhabited her body and technical abilities. I also observed that the differences in our training backgrounds affected the outcome. As the work progressed, I became less interested in moulding her into the shape I had in mind and more interested in seeing what choices she would make to embody the movement tasks or ideas I proposed. She remarked at one point

that she found my movement interesting and challenging both for the odd coordination which were often homo-lateral¹ in nature and for the way I used transition steps to transport her through the space, which were new to her. The result of Ziyian's attempts to resolve the challenges was a movement vocabulary that was born out of the liminal space between my vision and her interpretation. I found this most interesting and set about putting forward very specific definitions of movement architecture and then letting go of my expectations to allow the dancer to create another result out of the act of attempting the task.

Coming back to the process for this case study, as I watched the DVD I could identify what my original movement intentions were. Working with a new interpreter allowed me to revisit and reconsider my original specific vision for the vocabulary and assess the results. Additionally, I had been teaching Justine in my fourth year ballet course at York University for two years in which she had absorbed the technical and qualitative movement lessons that enabled her to readily adapt my original movement ideas. However, in many instances, Ziyian's adaptations and her idiosyncratic interpretation had become integral to the piece to a degree that it added important inflections to the choreographic text, and a quality of humanity that was important to the work. I found that I needed to shift into the role of dramaturg to draw out Justine's adaptations and interpretation in order to bring out the crucial qualities of the work. Much of the technical movement vocabulary was easy for her to execute, but this often removed the physical tension of the act of attempting something demanding that was so critical to the concept of the piece.

¹ Homolateral pertains to the same side of the body. In this context it refers to movement initiated on one side of the body as in the right arm and right leg moving simultaneously as opposed to heterolateral which would move with the right arm and left leg in opposition as in walking or running.

2.2 ***Shifting Silence*** **Case Study #2**

The curtain flies out slowly introducing the opening scene already in progress. The lead male dancer is in the midst of walking in an oval pattern from upstage to downstage within a sharply focused rectangle of light. He is surveying the space contained within the rectangular corridor of light. He begins dancing and he delineates the space with his movement and gestures which imply solid walls around him. Pushing against the imaginary walls reveals the notion of contained, private space and these idiosyncratic movements transmit the identity of the character. Other dancers enter the area of the stage outside of the corridor of light slowly and unobtrusively scattered in the space. The lighting outside the corridor is muted implying that they are imagined or remembered rather than literally present to him.

vignette by John Ottmann, Fleck Dance Theatre 2013

Shifting Silence is a work of contemporary dance choreographed by Polish-Canadian dance artist Robert Glumbek. The piece is thirty-two minutes in duration performed to music by J.S. Bach and Senking. The Original Lighting Design is by Damian Chmielarz and adapted Lighting Design by Oz Weaver; the Original Costume Design is by Jürgen Kirner and adapted Costume Design by Raegan Moore.

The work was originally choreographed in 2011 for Ballett Mannheim in Germany. A professional relationship existed between Robert Glumbek and Kevin O'Day, the Artistic Director of Ballett Mannheim. As a result of this relationship O'Day invited Glumbek to create a dance work for Ballett Mannheim. The company furnished Glumbek with the time and resources necessary to fulfill the concept and vision for his piece. Glumbek spent a total of four months in Mannheim creating the piece.

Glumbek describes the work as autobiographical. He also sees the work as an exploration of identity in the face of aging through mid-life. In conversation, he discusses selectivity regarding the varied contexts of personal intimacy contrasted by

social pressures. His reflections inform the concept, crafting and stage design of the piece set on Ballett Mannheim.

Shifting Silence is made up of thirteen scenes divided into solos, numerous duets, trios and group dance sections. The piece focuses on a central male character and his interactions with six other dancers. The six dancers are comprised of two men and four women who represent figures from Glumbek's life. Though they may be specific to Glumbek, they are abstracted to the degree that they are composites of individuals and relationships. Over the course of the choreography, the lead male dancer performs in solos, duets, trios and group dances as he interacts with the other characters. In the scene which follows the opening solo all the dancers remain onstage and a series of overlapping solos followed by a group section and then a series of overlapping duets occur in a steady relay or collage, giving the impression of a collection of remembered relationships and moments from the past. I question how far into the past. This could be seen as an intertextual reference to Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. Is he the same man through time but altered with each life? What is clear to me from discussions with Glumbek is that the concept uses repeated gestures and movement motifs to reveal a man who changes through time though something of the past remains embedded in him in the present.

Glumbek's schedule permitted him to attend only five days of rehearsals at the start of process which was six weeks prior to the performances. During the bulk of studio and all technical rehearsals Glumbek was out of the country and therefore not available. I had meetings with him prior to his departure to review details of the piece and discuss my responsibilities which included running rehearsals, acting as dramaturg,

re-staging the work, and overseeing the technical rehearsals, staging, lighting design and costume reconstruction.

The first meeting between Glumbek and me was comprised of detailed discussion about the necessary logistical changes to the staging of the piece: The original concept employed a white floor panel to delineate a large rectangular space running from centre stage up to the backdrop of the stage; a peaked white set piece suggestive of the roof and walls of a house; modular walls hung on either side of the rectangular floor panel. The original work also employed, as part of the set, a projection which consisted of a video of the main character walking slowly towards the camera from a great distance during the course of the piece, concluding when his face filled the frame upon the scrim at the rear of the stage.

The theatre of the original staging is considerably larger and has greater facility capacity than the Fleck Theatre in Toronto where the remount took place. The budget for the performances did not allow for renting a larger theatre nor the cost of building the set pieces and creating a new video projection for the new version. For these reasons many aspects of the staging were impacted; for example, the white floor panel was replaced with lighting projected on the floor to create a white strip the same size as the original panel. This solution proved effective in dealing with the limited space because the length of the strip could be shortened and lengthened for specific sections of the piece as needed. The modular walls were also not an option at the Fleck Theatre because of their size, depth of the backstage area, and absence of a fly gallery² high enough to hang them. The video projection could not be used either, because it

² The area in a theatre above the stage where set pieces and backdrops hang out of sight of the audience until they are lowered into place for the performance.

required a deep back stage area to mount a projector at an appropriate distance behind the upstage scrim, which the Fleck Theatre does not have. However, other elements such as the number of cast members, the costume concept and the music remained the same as the original.

These scenographic details had a significant effect on the presentation of the work. For example, the white floor and walls were significant set pieces designed to delineate the space and imply the personal and private space of the lead character's environment as well as their psychological parallel to his psycho-emotional state. The large video projection also provided imagery reinforcing the themes of life journey and identity. Therefore, the interpretation of the dancers required attention to all these essential qualities of the piece that were altered for the remount. Throughout this process, I reflect that an important dramaturgical component of the remounting of *Shifting Silence* consisted of facilitating the dancers' evolution from mimesis to embodiment and interpretation in preparation for performances.

In the short period of time that Glumbek was present, the material was taught and necessary alterations were made. It was important for me to grasp the work from a variety of perspectives in order to successfully fulfill my role. Along with the scenographic adaptations, we discussed the concept for the piece and what had motivated him and what had informed the work. It was important that I have a grasp of these ideas to be able to coach the dancers as they interpreted their understanding of their roles and keep an awareness of the throughline of the piece. Glumbek and I also watched the DVD of the original piece and went through each scene to discuss movement vocabulary, individual quality of each role, spacing of each dancer in relation

to the space and each other, music cues, timing cues in relation to each performer, lighting cues and design, and costuming. I noted all the information and referred to it as needed.

Glumbek began the first rehearsal with a brief discussion with the dancers about the piece. He started with the statement that he feels there is always an autobiographical element in his choreographies. He then gave a brief synopsis or overview of the concept for *Shifting Silence*. Glumbek reflected that as he aged he found himself increasingly selective and even guarded about to whom and to what kinds of people he opened himself and invited into his life. Finally, he described the staging of the piece briefly to identify the delineation of the space into public and private or personal spaces.

Glumbek later told me that he deliberately avoided going into detail about who each character was and what their relationship was about. His concern was that the work might be negatively affected if the dancers tried to play or act out a character too theatrically; rather he wanted the choreography to speak for itself and for the dancers to have the permission to discover their relationships through the movement and their interpretation of it. In effect Glumbek revealed his own view that interpretation must not be hampered by imitation.

The rehearsal process then turned to watching DVD of the original version by Ballett Manheim. Then I worked with the lead male dancer to begin learning the choreography from video. Concurrently, Glumbek worked with the group to teach the first group section. The process continued in this manner, each of us teaching different material simultaneously and at other times working together on one section with

Glumbek leading the rehearsal while I took notes to record details. The notes fell into categories: spacing, movement vocabulary, dramaturgical intent, musicality, synchronization, character and relationship intent.

Components of the work required adjustment and adaptation not only because of the parameters of the Toronto venue but also due to the difference of the casting. That being said, only a limited number of alterations to the text of the choreography were necessitated by the new context.

Upon Glumbek's departure I oversaw the ongoing rehearsal process. In the first couple of weeks my process involved breaking down the piece into its various scenes and structuring rehearsals to work on the scenes individually. In each scene I set intentions to work on specific parameters, giving notes to the cast regarding the details of the movement text, the movement spacing, synchronization, dynamics, and physical intent. In the final two weeks we ran through the piece in its entirety daily along with working on the needs of individual sections. I shifted from giving notes specific to the text to putting an emphasis on the energy, focus and presence of the dancers in relation to the space and each other.

The scenography for the original version of *Shifting Silence* was designed to support the concept for the piece. Certain elements such as the modular walls and the video projection put literal context to the concept. In the remounted version, these elements were not present but the concept remained and relied on the imagination of the viewer. The rehearsal process was not affected by the absence of the set pieces because even if those elements were possible to include in the remount, they would only be available to the dancers or me the day before the opening performance. The

short turnaround time for adding these elements would have posed significant challenges in the new situation. Therefore, transposing the studio rehearsals into the theatre space was simplified from the original version, where the dancers had to adapt themselves to the lack of set pieces and visual elements in a short turnaround time. Nevertheless, *Shifting Silence* was successfully adapted without the original scenography as described in the vignette in the opening of this chapter.

2.3 *Nutcracker - Snow Trio* Case Study #3

“All my choreography is a choreographic exercise, from my middle-life solo performance in *See #6* to *The Nutcracker*. It is about seeing if I could do it, and having done it, letting it rest, so I can go on to the next experiment.” –James Kudelka

The Nutcracker is a stalwart ballet for countless ballet companies around the world which has taken on a status as one of dance’s biggest traditions. The National Ballet of Canada’s current version is the re-envisioning of the classic ballet by James Kudelka, a prolific Canadian choreographer whose work in classical ballet, modern and contemporary dance is widely acknowledged as highly innovative. Originally choreographed in 1995, Kudelka’s *Nutcracker* enlisted a team of impressive collaborators. The set and costume design was created by Santo Loquasto, the Tony Award winning designer who has frequently designed for dance, theatre and film. The lighting design was created by Jennifer Tipton, whose credits include numerous dance theatre and opera productions in North America, and The National Ballet’s music director, David Briskin, oversaw the company orchestra’s treatment of Tchaikovsky’s score. Additionally, the production was stage managed by Ernest Abugov and Jeff Morris.

The National Ballet of Canada permitted me to attend rehearsals of *The Nutcracker* for the purposes of conducting my research. *The Nutcracker* is a full-length ballet with many scenes and divertimentos. In order to plan my work time, I requested a copy of the rehearsal schedule in order to identify which rehearsals I was able to attend and which scenes would be most interesting. I felt that if I tried to observe too many different scenes it would be difficult to distill my research into the framework I had

established. Therefore, for the purposes of this research I limited myself to one scene, *The Snow Trio*. In contrast to the two other case studies, I only participated as an observer, and was not involved in the remounting process. As in the previous case study, I have replaced the names of the performers with letters.

The process was relatively short and efficient. I attended four days of rehearsal. I informed the rehearsal director of *The Snow Trio* when I would be attending rehearsals and that I would be observing and taking notes of the rehearsal process and attend a subsequent performance. I also received permission to attend rehearsals near the end of the process when James Kudelka would work with the dancers.

The first rehearsal consisted of layers of repetition of the choreography by a cast of dancers who had not performed the work together, although one of them had performed the role with a different cast in the past. In addition, two other casts were present: another mixed cast of old and new, and a cast who had performed the roles before. I made note of the multiple sources of information in the room, comprised of the embodied knowledge of the dancers and the documented and experiential knowledge of the rehearsal director. The rehearsal director assisted the choreographic process at the inception of the production and has participated in all subsequent remounts for the past eighteen years. Therefore he possessed the most depth of knowledge of the work.

The rehearsal process appeared to follow a structured, almost formulaic approach. This approach addressed the following areas: details of the architecture of the choreographic text, the configuration of the three bodies within the text, the use of space, dynamic coordination among the three dancers, and musicality.

During the first rehearsal, the rehearsal director began with the details of the text. The dancers appeared to have a basic knowledge of the choreography, likely from previous viewing of performances and/or performance recordings. The first rehearsal began with the dancers executing a short sequence from the opening section of the choreography. The rehearsal director stopped them after a short duration to give them corrective notes and discuss nuances and details of the choreographic text, which were missing in their execution. Initially, much of the coaching was towards the female dancer regarding details of the footwork³. The detail was quite specific and revealed the specificity integral to the choreographic text, which would be seen throughout the rehearsal process. The rehearsal director instructed them to repeat the sequence to incorporate the new information. Again the rehearsal director stopped them, this time to provide information regarding the physical configuration and relationship of their three bodies in space. Once they achieved a reasonable level of success he then gave them notes about the use of space and again instructed them to execute the sequence, again with a focus on incorporating this additional layer of information. The process was repeated with the addition of information regarding the timing and coordination of the three in relation to each other and finally in relation to the musical interpretation. The rehearsal director continued this pattern of dosing out details in layers, then rewinding to the beginning of a section to have the dancers integrate the elements. The process appeared strategic and expedient in leading the dancers through a series of progressions that targeted specific goals at each stage. It was not clear if it was a

³ For example a movement of her right leg descending from a 90 degree height as her partner pivots her body required that she leave the leg behind so as her body turned the right leg would become extremely over-crossed in an exaggerated coup de pied position behind the left leg and there would be a spiral through the body.

planned progression or if it was the experience and intuition of the rehearsal director coming to bear on the process as it occurred.

At certain intervals the rehearsal director also spoke to details of the movement and its meaning to impart the intended essence to the dancers for their knowledge as well as to inform them of how they could inhabit the movement. Following Franko's idea of dance as text and the relation between dance and political power, I draw a parallel between *The Nutcracker* and the political power in the Baroque dance. For example, the Snow Queen runs from downstage center to upstage right and the two men run with her but slightly behind her and on either side of her. As they performed this in rehearsal she looked over her shoulders to see where the men were and acknowledge them. The comment from the rehearsal director was that she needed to run without focusing on them or being concerned with their whereabouts in the space because she is a Royal and they are her attendants. It is their role to attend to where she is going in space and hers is to go with confidence focus and direction for them to follow. As it relates to Franko's discussion of political power, it was evident that this moment communicated status and power differential subtly and distinctly.

The process of execution, stopping for notes and restarting to incorporate new information occurred at fairly regular intervals which I measured as approximately sixteen counts of music. Then the next sixteen count section would be addressed in layered fashion. After working through three to four sections in this layered manner, they were directed to perform the sections successively. The rehearsal director imparted any additional notes or information before moving on to the next section of the choreography. Remarkably, stopping and starting with such frequency did not seem to

interrupt the integrity of the rehearsal. Rather, the rehearsal director maintained a sense of flow through the regular rhythm he established from the outset.

Over the course of the rehearsals, it was apparent that the architectural elements of the text were integral to the significance of the work, and the dancers' misinterpretation of these textual elements caused a loss of meaning in the choreography. In some cases a missed element caused discord among the three dancers, highlighting the need for them to remain alert to all of the elements of the choreography and the physical relationship to each other in time and space. One example is the "tripod" series of precisely configured triangle formations with specific facings of each point of the triangle. The rehearsal director defined the spacing which involved a great deal of travelling and changes of direction. The previous cast offered valuable information regarding accomplishing the spacing. The dancers recognized elements that helped or hindered their ability to achieve the goals. The addition of their collective experience fast tracked the learning process. It was evident that the group was conscious of the time sensitive nature of the process and accordingly acted collaboratively.

James Kudelka led the penultimate rehearsal and addressed many choreographic and qualitative elements. The dancers were pushed to extend their range of movement to the full extent of their kinesphere⁴ and to push their use of momentum to travel and fill the space to a greater degree. I observed a focus to rely on the physicality of the text to bring the energy and vitality to the essence of the scene. The choreographer changed the choreography in three places. In the final solo by the Snow Queen he added two pirouettes in arabesque, additional *emboîté* foot work and a

⁴ A term from Laban movement analysis meaning the space within reach of the body.

*fondue, relevé, développé*⁵ preparation for the exit lift to the final solo. He specified that he added the material to make the solo more visually exciting.

The choreographer also increased the complexity of the trio by adding a *soutenu* and *fouetté* attitude during the promenade section with the two men. He recalled that he had pared down the material for previous casts and now felt that there was not enough density in the text. I noted that the choreographer also made side comments about the way some artistic staff previously reacted to choreographic changes with disconcerted tension. However, he was obviously not dissuaded from making alterations to tweak and tailor the choreography to achieve his intentions. Was this because he views choreography as a living text that is never finished being written and reinterpreted? (Lafortune 42-43)

The remount of *Nutcracker* was efficient and expedient in part due to the tight time constraints and also due to the effective strategies of the rehearsal director and the dancers. I did not contribute as a dramaturg, because I received permission to attend rehearsals as an observer only, which was appropriate for this process. However, I observed that the rehearsal director placed himself in the role of conduit for dramaturgical information that had links to the original dramaturgy of the premier of the production. The rehearsal director was adamant that his goal was to be faithful to the text and essence of the choreography. His intimate knowledge of the text was elaborate and multilayered in part because he was the choreographer's assistant during the creation but also, as he revealed, because he is the company Choreologist⁶ and as

⁵ French terminology referring to specific steps or movements from the codified syllabi of classical ballet.

⁶ Choreology is a system of notation developed by Joan and Rudolf Benesh to record dance choreography. Comprised of codified symbols it is written on the five line stave of sheet music. Choreologists study Benesh Notation at the Benesh Institute in London, England.

such, he notated much of the ballet and referred to notation and specific notes of dramaturgical nature made by the choreographer-notes he had recorded to maintain a faithful record for posterity. His view was that the notation was essential to maintaining the integrity of the text but not sufficient on its own to facilitate a meaningful remount of the work. He further elaborated on his opinion that an accurate archive of a choreography created by a notator is not, on its own, adequate to remount the essence of a work; in the absence of the embodied knowledge the essence of the work could not be successfully conveyed.

The rehearsal director displayed skill and knowledge which he employed by sharing such information to facilitate the dancers in successfully navigating the essence of the text. In a post-rehearsal conversation with the rehearsal director, I inquired about his strategy or approach to the rehearsal process without sharing any of my observations in order to avoid influencing his response. He listed his strategy in the following order: helping the dancers to know the choreography and musicality as quickly as possible, providing detail about the choreographic text, addressing the problems specific to the cast as they presented, and selecting which issues and details most needed addressing as well as those which he could get away with passing over, in consideration of time limits. He also spoke of trying to impart James Kudelka's vision and intention for the scene to the dancers. I then described my observations of his work in the studio highlighting the dosing out layers of detail. The rehearsal director found this to be an interesting and useful concrete description of his intuitive actions in the rehearsal process. He further mused that a deliberate strategy based on specific layering of information could be effective in streamlining the rehearsal process. I

conclude by questioning how the outcomes might be affected if more time was available to delve further into the vision of the choreographer and essence of the piece.

The previous three chapters provided an overview of the three case studies for my research. The following chapters will elaborate more specifically on the concepts, questions and themes presented earlier in the introduction of this thesis.

3. Mimesis

As academic researchers Michael Worton and Judith Still reveal in their book *Intertextuality: theories and practices*, philosophical ideas which form the Western roots of creative tradition are informed by concepts of imitation and creation (3-7). Platonian and Aristotelian considerations of these concepts are informative to the discussion of artist's voice. Plato considers the work of the poet imitation twice removed: the original and the representation. This is also reflected in linguist and semiotician, Ferdinand Saussure's (1857-1913) language of semiotics: the signified and the signifier (54-66). To illustrate this Plato compared the artist who paints the image of a bed, with the carpenter who builds a physical bed. And to go one step further, the designer who conceived of the form of a bed. Aristotle's theory of imitation sees the creative act as a distilled intensification of an accumulation of texts the writer has been informed by, and likely the readership as well.

German Philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) affirms that imitation is not of what is seen outside of the self, but rather the creator imitates their internal experiences and perceptions. Unlike the religious Aesthetics, Nietzsche did not see the artist as a conduit for god but rather the artist as creator himself. The artist has his/her own voice which is influenced by the collaboration with many and varied texts they have experienced (432).

According to translator and Aristotelian commentator, Michael Davis,

“...mimesis seems to be a stylizing of reality in which the ordinary features of our world are brought into focus by a certain exaggeration, the relationship of the imitation to the object it imitates being something like the relationship of

dancing to walking. Imitation always involves selecting something from the continuum of experience, thus giving boundaries to what really has no beginning or end. *Mimêsis* involves a framing of reality that announces that what is contained within the frame is not simply real. Thus the more "real" the imitation the more fraudulent it becomes." (14)

I apply 'mimesis' as a concept that implies the subjugation to an external parameter outside of the actor's influence. Limitations and restrictions are not necessarily limiting to personal voice and can even lend themselves to inadvertent development of the voice. I use the term in the context of the learning process where mimesis instigates engagement with the choreographic text. This is the point of departure for the dancer's physical connection to the text. Through a variety of sources and means the dancers entered the remounting process through the door of imitation.

In the studio setting observing the dancers process the text of the choreography several relevant questions became apparent. What is being imitated? I touched on this area of research in my paper *Questions of Personal Voice: creativity, imitation and intertextuality*. The question of imitation is at the root of the remounting process and relates to the larger context of the history of art and Western culture where we see the influence of concepts like the act of creation in juxtaposition with imitation. As Michael Worton and Judith Still reveal, philosophical ideas which form the Western roots of creative tradition are informed by concepts of imitation and creation (3-7). This is pertinent to the discussion of mimesis in remounting processes because it contextualizes the creative process and philosophical notions of identity and meaning.

It is more than a passing down of aesthetic traditions; it is a deeply rooted cultural consciousness which traces back to ancient Greece.

In the mimesis phase we are imitating the body of the other, the movement vocabulary developed by/with the choreographer, the observable physicality of the original or other interpreter. However, the ultimate goal is to capture the essence or energy of the work in the performance of it. To refer again to Michael Davis's research, "Imitation always involves selecting something from the continuum of experience, thus giving boundaries to what really has no beginning or end." (14) The continuum of experience of the artist speaks directly to the intertextual nature of the act of creation and also sheds light on the intertextual nature of remounting and reconstructing. Whereas reconstructing refers to the text, remounting refers to the idea or the essence. The act of remounting; bringing an existing production to the stage anew, inevitably engages the performer to infuse the choreography with their idea of it. Their continuum of experience comes to bear on the process and outcome. Because of the intertextual nature of performance, the energy and form changes in every new context. This does not mean that the meaning of the work changes but that the intertextual nature of the context and the identities of players involved produces an effect that plays on the essence of the performance.

In continuation, I present three case studies in which I clearly identify the mimesis stage and analyze how this phase evolves in different situations. Additionally, in these case studies I identify three slight variations pertaining to mimesis. The first case study, *Flesh and a Broken Whisper*, describes a mimesis or imitation through reliance on the dancer's personal interpretation of the choreographer's direct explanation and

description of the text. The second case study, *Shifting Silence*, exemplifies a reliance on video recording of the choreography as well as movement explanation by the choreographer, and the third case study outlines a mimesis that relies on demonstration and a direct transmission of the choreography from those who have previously performed the work.

So, to elaborate on mimesis from *Shifting Silence*, I focus on a soloist who is a mature artist with strong technical skills and a significant body of experience as an interpreter. In the piece, the soloist dances a dynamic role originally performed by a physically and technically adept dancer from Ballett Mannheim⁷ whose precision and tight punctuation of movement is a strong quality in her interpretation.

The dancer's imitation of the role began with observing the performance video. She was struck by the quality of strong punctuation and physical precision, and began pouring her energy into mimicking what she saw. However, she felt that the level of technical precision that she observed in the video would be challenging for her to match. After observing her for several rehearsals, I became aware that her execution of the text appeared to plateau and ceased to evolve. This also made me realize certain shortcomings of using video for mimesis. The dancer's difficulty in mimicking the role was particularly evident in her solo section where two male dancers also performed a duet.

The importance of this section is that both the solo and duet punctuate each other. The duet opens the scene with a slow stalking like entrance by the two men who walk into the space facing each other—one leaning sharply forward with his shoulder and

⁷ Ballett National Theatre Mannheim is a contemporary ballet company under the direction of American choreographer/dancer Kevin O'Day since 2002.

clavicle pressed onto the other's thigh. They perform the first section of their duet and conclude in a tableau on the floor. This is the female soloist's cue to enter the space and begin her solo. The men's duet re-commences at the conclusion of the first section of her solo when she comes into their line of vision and gestures across her face with her hand. The interplay between the solo and duet continues four times before the scene is concluded. This solo brings focus to the female dancer's character and shows the power and tension in her body. Establishing her character prior to her feature duet with the lead male dancer provides a crucial climax to the piece.

After several rehearsals, I questioned the soloist with a sincere desire to understand what she was experiencing without judging her performance in rehearsal, though I felt it was lacking something energetically. She revealed that she felt challenged to live up to the technical physicality of the original cast and was focusing her energy on achieving replication of the original dancer's execution as closely as possible.

The desire to achieve precise replication is nothing new in art. Franko discusses the tension, long debated by the likes of Denis Diderot, Heinrich von Kleist and Gordon Craig, which illustrates the desire for perfect repeatability in the face of human imperfection. (145) In the dancer's case, I felt that her desire for replication was similar to Franko's discussion of naturalness versus technique. Her repeated viewing of the video seemed to cause a perfectionistic response that was not constructive to the process of moving through mimesis to her own reading of the text. I instinctively wanted to distance her from the video in order to facilitate her movement towards embodiment of the text. I redirected her approach to the material by asking her what she saw in the

role energetically as opposed to the technical and physical aspects. I also shared my reflections of what I saw and what the choreographer had conveyed about the humanity and emotionality of the piece. I distilled my observation, telling the dancer that what I saw in her execution presented as technically clean, but lacked in interpretive dimension and vibrancy because it was featuring technical physicality alone. She gave the impression of attempting to be something other than her authentic self interpreting the essence of the character. I spoke to her saying, “I see someone polite. She (the character) is not polite, she is rough and raw and daring.” This discussion affected a distinct change from the imitation of the role to her subsequent embodiment of physical power in subsequent rehearsals. From that point, she was able to unleash her power and strip away the pretense of literalism, which according to Franko is what often causes failure in reconstruction processes (12). The female soloist also confided that she felt more confident in the role as her experience shifted to a more authentic embodiment and interpretation.

The previous example illustrates a limitation of interpretation when staying in the imitation phase. In contrast, another dancer in *Shifting Silence*, approached the work differently. This dancer is a young dancer with an intertextual background informed by classical ballet, contemporary dance, jazz, and urban dance techniques. She initiated imitation of the choreography with a quiet confidence and autonomy characterized by attacking the movement with clear kinetic goals. She was clearly able to identify how momentum and dynamic qualities played on the movement from the onset of her introduction to the text. She utilized the video minimally and went to the side of the room on her own frequently to go through the movement and analyze aspects of the

choreography and identify landmarks in the text; in particular, the section which begins with two of the dancers entering the space with high energy. This section involved broad sweeping movement travelling through the space to open the scene. Then the dancers perform movements in physical contact with each other side by side before dissecting the space from stage left to right at the mid stage level. One of the dancers approached the work kinetically and intuitively in a way that enabled her to move quickly through the mimesis phase and into the adaptive phase where she began to embody the movement because she did not dwell on how to mimic the original dancer. On the contrary, from the onset she focused on how her body could achieve the text and produce the dynamic quality of the allegro and travelling work.

In *Flesh and a Broken Whisper*, the dancer for the remount was Justine Comfort, a considerably younger and less experienced dancer than the one on whom the work was created. They also had different training, with the original dancer being more rooted in modern dance and butoh, while Justine comes from a background in ballet, contemporary and jazz dance. I put considerable thought into how to begin the process in order to facilitate Justine's entry into the process as effectively as possible. Knowing the age and experience differential made me cautious, also because I recalled the intimidating personal experience of learning *In the Middle Somewhat Elevated* (IMSE) by William Forsythe.

To begin the remount process for IMSE, a video of the entire ballet was shown to the remount cast. I remember my reaction as I watched the formidable dancers of Ballett Frankfurt attacking the movement with stealth and deft articulation of their bodies to the full extent of their kinesphere. My thoughts immediately became judgemental and

full of doubt as to my ability to move in the slicing, wringing, dynamic quality they exhibited. I had never seen dancers use their torso and arms like that; it was intimidating. My reaction to *In the Middle Somewhat Elevated* was to question my sense of identity and the sufficiency of my accumulated experiences. That experience impacted my approach to working with Justine in that scenarios where comparison and negation of the value of one's voice potentially hinder the process at hand.

Reflecting on this memory, I set up the first rehearsals to limit Justine's access to the video at least until she had experienced the material herself and I felt a good degree of confidence in her experience and execution of it. In this way, my past experience informed my present dramaturgical approach to facilitate the movement through the first into the second of the three phases of remounting *Flesh and a Broken Whisper*. In each case study outlined above, imitation played a key initial role in the journey and goal to bring the work to the stage.

The first rehearsals of *The Snow Trio* from *The Nutcracker* show the dancers struggling with the material as they rigorously work to achieve a facsimile of the original choreography. The mimesis phase was short lived, in part due to the limited amount of rehearsal time but also because the choreography demanded that the three bodies interact, coordinate and respond together in symbiosis. Therefore each individual could not imitate the choreography independently of the others and achieve the physical tasks and functionality. The trio requires a high level of awareness of the dancer's body and that of the others simultaneously.

Comparing my own experience to that of the dancers mentioned above, I come to the conclusion that personal identity in remounting a dance work is also an intertextual

concept in the sense that identity is a process of interpreting and bringing past knowledge and accomplishments to life in the present. Thus the relation between the dance and the choreographic text could be related to what Worton and Still explain:

“The theory of intertextuality insists [...] (for the moment to be understood in the narrower sense) cannot exist as a hermetic or self-sufficient whole, and so does not function as a closed system. This is for two reasons: Firstly, the writer is a reader of texts (in the broadest sense) before s/he is a creator of texts, and therefore the work of art is inevitably shot through with references, quotations and influences of every kind. (1)”

This intertextual, layered environment of the person affects my approach to the process of mimesis as described above. The complexity of this intertextual nature of the choreography, dancer and dramaturg extends to innumerable external influences. In my experience, being conscious of the complexity of the artistic environment in which I operate benefits my work as a dramaturg. The many interdependent elements knit together to construct an artistic whole product, including choreography, dancers, lighting, scenography, costume, and music. As well, choreography is stylistically intertextual; the choreographer's staging meshes a number of possible scenographic influence -film, biography, architecture, design. Dancers' histories and aesthetic points of view play significant roles in the outcome of a work, simultaneously as readers and writers in the sense quoted above. The numerous elements play such a significant role, that I pose the following questions: Is replication sufficient for a successful remount project? And additionally, how is originality defined in relation to replication? I think of William Forsythe's piece which he choreographed on the Paris Opera Ballet star, Sylvie

Guillem. Guillem had a short 'bob' style hair cut at that time, and the choreographer wanted this element to be part of subsequent remounts. In the version that I was involved with there were two dancers who were cast in Guillem's role, and they each wore a wig in the style of Guillem's hair for each performance. In the instance of *Shifting Silence*, Glumbek was concerned about the height of one of the dancers because they were shorter than the original dancer. Whereas Forsythe's choice seems to reflect a stylistic preference or aesthetic signification, Glumbek was concerned with a change in meaning if a tall man danced a duet with a considerably shorter man as compared to two men of very similar stature. Would the meaning of their relationship change from one of equals to one of status differential? So once more, what are we replicating in the process of remounting, and is mimesis understood as replication? In my opinion and as the case studies above indicate, the answer to these questions is no. Since the essence of a piece transmitted through the text is the goal of remounting, physical differences in dancers are transcended through adequate guidance and coaching through the mimesis stage and into the embodiment of the choreography.

In conclusion, observing the various elements of mimesis outlined above, there are a few lessons to draw from this experience. For one, the use of video technology as a recording element would seem a great benefit for having historical record of a choreographic work. However, there are a few potential pitfalls, such as the soloist in *Shifting Silence* whose overuse of the video restrained her in the mimesis phase, delayed her evolution into embodiment and interpretation of the text. Also, recalling my intimidation in face of the video of the Ballett Frankfurt, I attempted to mitigate this concern with Justine in *Flesh and a Broken Whisper* to a greater degree of success. In

this sense, I consciously tried to bypass the mimesis phase as quickly as possible. However, the video did serve as a very useful tool for learning the material efficiently and as a reference for the lighting design and staging details for the piece. Video did not play a part in *The Nutcracker* process of course, as the dancers mimicked other dancers. The dancers in *The Snow Trio* had many sources of information readily available at all times through the rehearsal director's intimate knowledge, his notated score of the choreography, as well as multiple cast members present. I observed that the dancers in this process had to move to the embodiment phase almost immediately because of the intricacy of the partnering work and also because clear explanations of the goals of the text were given and they necessarily needed to search for solutions within their own bodies to achieve those goals.

4. Embodiment

Embodiment, in the context of this thesis, is understood as an accumulated knowledge and memory in our body, which is experienced sensorially, then transmitted and expressed through the practice of movement. The French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, developed a theory of embodiment, called *habitus* by which he relates a system of social differences and differential positions of individuals within society (172). I extend the idea of *habitus* to dance and dramaturgy, understanding the dancer as a product of social conditioning not only via his/her cultural background, but also his/her dance and educational experience. In other words, the remounting process also places the *habitus*, or different cultural, political and dance backgrounds of the dancer, dramaturg and choreographer into dialogue.

In my own practice as a dramaturg, a respect for the complex and inextricable link between the body and the mind is integral to the embodied experience. In my opinion, this relation between body and mind is based on constant choice-making. Dancers imprint their own signature on movement constantly through the conscious and unconscious actions governed by the individual experiences and personal history of each body. Ultimately, my job as dramaturg is to liberate the essence of the choreography through the individual process of each dancer. But even more important for the dramaturg is the constant evolvment of the relation between past and present; that is to say, creating a new experience in the present while retaining an essence from the past.

My experience as a dramaturg and rehearsal director in fact began while I was a professional dancer. My role as a dancer was active rather than passive in the creative

process, because I participated in choice making. This experience is the one which I transferred to my present function as a dramaturg. I was making interpretive choices in 1994 when I was involved in an exciting remount process of *Bet Ann's Dance* while dancing with Ballet British Columbia. The new director of the company, John Alleyne, had recently been invited to create a work on New York City Ballet as part of the company's Diamond Project⁸. Ballet B.C. acquired the work for the following season. In the process of remounting, I took artistic license with parts of the dance text with the intention of adapting the movement so that it made sense to the architecture of my body as well as the landscape of my artistic sensibilities. The result was a certain degree of alteration of the movement text as well as the interpretation of its musicality. I felt confident in attempting to embody the piece this way because I sensed a collaborative attitude from the director/choreographer. His response to some of these modifications was that he would not have chosen to do the movement the way I did, but he respected the fact that I had made choices and justified them through my embodied voice and interpretation that facilitated appropriate, interesting and intuitive layering of my interpretation as the dancer/performer and therefore indicated that my new adaptation was adopted as the new version of the choreography.

This experience also had profound impact for my future work as a choreographer and teacher. In my approach to pedagogy, the idea of the unavoidable nature of the individual embodiment of each dancer is a central theme. For instance, I observe that dancers will not move identically even when attempting to do so. Far from being a problem, I view this as the wonderfully inevitable personal and physiological diversity of

⁸ The Diamond project is a biannual presentation of dance works by invited developing choreographers hosted by New York City Ballet under the sponsorship of the Irene Diamond Foundation

each student. Accordingly, I imbue my classes with information and instruction to instigate a dialogue around the practice of individualism. The result gives greater animation to the dancer and provides her/him with a palate of choice and selectivity to embody movement with dexterity, detail, precision, animation, and presence. Here I am touching on the topic of the relation between perfection and identity in a dialogue that focuses on interpretation through the body of the dancer. Within the context of remounting, this process transitions a dancer from mimesis to the phase of embodiment.

Thus from this perspective, I place embodiment in the second phase of remounting, informed by the factors of the embodied selections and choices made by the dancer/performer. Ideally dancers embody the choreographic text and adapt it to make sense of it within the physical and psychological frame of their bodies without losing the essence of the text itself. Through this phase they make numerous qualitative choices and select features of movement to corporalize the text with their body's own intrinsic logic. Within the context of remounting and reconstruction, embodiment is the phase which follows the imitation or mimesis phase.

The importance of the relation between embodiment and individuality, and the personality of the dancer, is examined in detail in the case study of Justine and *Flesh and a Broken Whisper*. For Justine, this piece was challenging from the perspective of stamina, but technically, some sections of the choreography were well within her range of facility while others challenged her abilities. During a rehearsal of a particularly dynamic section I observed Justine applying her own adaptations to the movement in order to accomplish the choreography more easily. In this instance the adaptations

reduced the effect of the text by removing the tension brought about by wrestling with the choreography. I harken back to the remount of *15 Heterosexual Duets* when James Kudelka commented that the original cast reached a point when the choreography was so familiar to their bodies and they had become so adept at executing it that there ceased to be a sense of risk and mutual dependence to a degree that the essence was lost.

The challenge of achieving essence is illustrated in another section of *Flesh and a Broken Whisper* requiring Justine to perform a slow, drawn out back bend followed by a sudden twist and fall onto her hands. Justine was capable of imitating this manoeuvre with relative ease physically. However the intention and meaning of this part only began to be revealed when she questioned the movement as it related to her own physicality and psychology. At this point, her approach evolved towards an embodiment of this part of the choreography. The important questions I posed to her regarding this movement were: Where is the tension in the body? Where is the moment of convergence between balance and fall? What does it mean to have and then lose control of balance? The latter question proved to be the key to unlocking the essence of the movement and supported the concept of the whole work. As dramaturg of my own choreography, I observed that this type of questioning served as catalyst towards greater embodiment leading towards a more performative and qualitatively better interpretation of the entire choreographic text. Together with imagery I offered to Justine, this questioning provided her with time and space to wrestle with the movement text and infuse the movement with meaning. The result was a more complete embodiment of the piece.

I believe the text for *Flesh and a Broken Whisper* contains qualities within it to bring about the intensity and emotionality necessary to reanimate the essential qualities of the piece. I understand essence in terms of choreography following Aristotle's definition, where essence is the nucleus of the individual thing. Additionally, as I think about the relation between the space and our body, I am more inclined to the definition given by Merleau-Ponty, where essence is interpreted as a felt sense that informs our ideas which pertain to phenomenology (193). In my choreography, *Flesh and a Broken Whisper*, the essence is the struggle and sense of danger brought about by the demanding physicality that brings the dancer close to the limits of her stamina. This hyper-physicality is the essence of the piece because the choreography conceptualizes the theme of the individual's internal resolve to surmount death and the external fight to survive in the world.

There are three parts of the piece in particular which frame the journey and intensity of the choreography which I associated with specific stanzas of the poem: *The Breaking* scene in which the dancer slowly dissects her body into disparate segments: "An abyss appears in the middle of its body between what instantly become two foreign shores". *The Fight* scene is notable for the intensity of driving energy that builds relentlessly pushing the dancer to exhaustion: "It abandons oneself to a hungry world and with the other self it flees." *The Crawl* scene, where the dancer traverses the space on hands and feet, and rises to almost stand and then fall back onto all fours. This movement symbolizes the resolve to carry on even in shattered form: "The abyss doesn't divide us. The abyss surrounds us."

Overall the essence of *Flesh and a Broken Whisper* is the extreme physicality of the piece which portrays the external suffering and the internal fight of an individual. Even though the piece was set on two dancers that have a different identity, abilities and qualities, the essence was preserved in the remounting of the piece.

My second case study, *Shifting Silence*, portrays the struggle between internal and external spaces. Rather than exemplifying an adaptation of the overall concept and essence of the choreographic text, as in *Flesh and a Broken Whisper*, this case deals with adaptation of specific movements on different body types in order to reanimate the essence of the piece. In *Shifting Silence* the use of pli⁹ and grounded movement is a signature quality running through the choreography. I recall one rehearsal when the choreographer was urgently giving some final instructions to the dancers. As the three women performed the trio, he insisted loudly that they “pli⁹, pli⁹, pli⁹!” In a humorous response one of the women demonstrated how deep she was pli-ing and remarked that any deeper and she would be sitting on the floor. The problem here is that a dancer with the physical ability to imitate the pli does not necessarily embody the sense of weight, dynamic resistance and overall intensity required of the choreography. In this case, the depth of pli was not the issue, but rather the pli needed to depict the movements’ essential intent and meaning which was related to the humanity of the subject matter. Over the course of the rehearsal process for *Shifting Silence*, I spoke directly to this issue and worked with the dancers to embody the use of weight and bring out the dynamic intensity of the choreography. However, one dancer in particular, required a more collaborative approach between dramaturg and dancer in adapting the

⁹ In classical ballet pli⁹ refers to bending the knee. In contemporary ballet this action is exaggerated to achieve greater depth in the movement.

choreographic material to a greater extent. In this piece, the dancer struggled with adapting the material to her body. I observed that her physical proportions and body type made it difficult for her to achieve the depth of pli   and kinetic embodiment demanded by the text to give the desired physicality and visual effect. It appeared to me that being less densely muscled than her counterpart from the original cast made it challenging for her to perform some of the specific positions. Most importantly, this limitation made it difficult for her to embody the desired kinetic intensity and visual effect of the pli  . Another challenge was injury; the soloist confided that she was having pain in one of her hip joints from a previous injury. She felt the need to pace herself to get through the performances without causing a recurrence. Although her intention was to adhere as closely as possible to the original choreography, I felt that her attempt to remain faithful to the text was not as effective as that of the other cast members. In this regard, her embodiment of the piece was not in line with the evolution of the rest of the cast, and she was beginning to lack coherence with the group because the movement was not carrying the appropriate intensity. I felt that adaptations to specific movements were needed to produce a positive result and address the dancer's physical limitations while respecting the essence of the choreographic text. To do so, I encouraged her to identify specific movements and positions that aggravated her hip in order to explore options for adaptation. The result was two motivations for adaptation: the first addressed the dancer's need for immediate relief of the hip joint, and the second addressed accurate embodiment of the text. In the first instance the adaptations were intended for the rehearsal process only to provide temporary relief and facilitate the dancer pacing herself in the lead up to performances. The second type of adaptation

was permanent alteration of the text because of the strain it produced on her hip joint. The adaptations involved adjusting the angle of some of the positions to either camouflage the fact that her pli   was shallow in certain movements, or shift the weight in lunge and squat-like positions to put more weight on the stronger leg. The desire to assist the dancer affected my focus because multiple considerations needed addressing, including the wellbeing of the dancer, the evolution of the rehearsal process with the group, the needs of the piece and the performance. I attempted to balance these issues while maintaining my focus as dramaturg and rehearsal director to maintain the forward momentum of the process. This example illustrates the fundamentally collaborative nature of adaptation, and the need for both dancer and dramaturg to cooperate in achieving proper embodiment of a choreographic text.

Adaptive collaboration can, at times, involve working to overcome psychological as much as physical barriers to enable a dancer to embody essential qualities of a piece. An example from *Shifting Silence* is a partnering section requiring dynamic, assertive, grounded interpretation. In this section, the female role involves manipulating the lead male dancer's body on the ground, pulling and pushing his legs and torso into various configurations. At the conclusion of the sequence, she stands and briefly balances on top of the dancer who is lying on his right side on the floor. Though it does not appear particularly difficult, this balance proved difficult for the two dancers involved. As a strategy we focused on the placement of the feet in order to attain the balance. Although I continued to encourage the female dancer to embody suspension in the fall that comes immediately after the balance, her tentativeness in approach affected her ability to successfully execute this movement. Upon discussing the section with her, she

admitted that her apprehension for the balance came from her assumption that standing on someone's body would be pain inducing. At this point, the male partner assured her that it did not cause pain, which resulted in an immediate change in the quality of movement and interaction she had with the male dancer. Once reassured that she was not causing pain to her partner, she was able to develop a distinct quality of suspension as she focused on the moment in between the balance and the loss of control as she tipped herself to fall backwards off of him. This moment illustrates the shift between two states which I relate to the essence of the piece: the break between discordant tension in relation to others and harmony with oneself in solitude.

As a dramaturg it is important that I ensure the choreography is embodied correctly, because incorrect adaptation of seemingly minor details of a piece can have undesired dramatic effects. Some brief examples of inappropriate interpretation causing a loss of the essential qualities from *Shifting Silence* are: One dancer's consistent orientation of his eyes on the floor, limiting projection and ability to energetically and theatrically fill the space, or the similarly introverted focus of another dancer suddenly directed out at the audience with an energy and intention to connect with the public in a 'mugging' sort of way which suddenly removed the fourth wall. These two examples of focus were inappropriate for the work and were inconsistent with the sense of interaction embodied by the other dancers. Observing the effect on the body language and meaning of the text, I raised the question of focus with the cast to address the needs of the text and to eliminate such incongruence and to identify intentions the group could embody for coherence. I recalled earlier discussions with the choreographer and revisited the concept of the group being representative of figures from the past. I also

brought attention to the fact that the lighting was designed to slightly conceal them as if behind a thin veil so as to maintain a level of ambiguity on the cast implying their place in the past. The use of light supported the concept and in turn helped inform the focus of the dancers.

I find it relevant to mention the effect of limited financial resources on an organization's ability to address a situation of injury that also has consequences for choreographic adaptation. The conundrum of scarce resources limits many dance companies' ability to have a second cast of dancers available in the event a replacement is necessitated. In the case of *Shifting Silence*, the company did have an apprentice dancer available. However, the apprentice was learning the material of two other dancers, not the dancer who was dealing with an injury issue. Additionally, the injured dancer's role required maturity to interpret and execute the partnering, which was beyond the experience level of the apprentice. A situation like this is not unfamiliar in contemporary dance circles and a common response is to continue working towards the performances hoping that the cast remains able to perform unhindered. If the dancer was not able to perform I would have altered the piece to divide her role between other dancers and have one of the other experienced female performers learn the choreography of that dancer's duet while the apprentice dancer covered the group sections she could perform proficiently.

In conclusion, I observe three distinct differences among the case studies. In the first case study, *Flesh and A Broken Whisper*, adaptation revolves around the issues of experience and technical proficiency of the dancer. The second case study, *Shifting Silence*, required adaptation of specific movement and moments of choreographic text

to accommodate physical differences of the dancers interpreting the work as well as changing some of the individual choreography to achieve the intended result of the piece. The third case study, *The Snow Trio*, involved adaptation among the group to accommodate each other's needs and achieve the desired, coordinated result. What was similar among all three was that they all followed a progression from imitation, or mimesis to embodiment and finally to personal interpretation in order to reproduce the intention and essence of the pieces.

My own embodied experience and knowledge as a dancer is transmitted through the dramaturgy to the choreographer and the dancers. I draw upon the past and posit that intertextuality in the context of embodiment is a meaningful dialogue between the choreography, the dancers and me in an assimilation of conscious and unconscious choices.

5. Interpretation

Choreography viewed as a form of embodied knowledge has advantages as well as disadvantages. Personally, I see an advantage to the fact that it identifies a dance text as never fixed, rather it is in a constant change and open to various interpretations from the choreographer, dancer, dramaturg and spectator. The dancer's body possesses a collection of knowledge transmitted through movement and expressed through the art form of the choreographic text. From the viewpoint of dancers' different body types, one can imagine an infinite number of interpretations of movement text, not to mention differences in gender or personality. Nevertheless, there is also a disadvantage in that this knowledge is ephemeral in nature and not easily recorded. This poses a specific challenge to the dramaturg in restaging or remounting choreographic text. Even in situations where written documentation of a piece exists, such as the case of Millicent Hodson's book *Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace: Reconstruction Score of the Original Choreography for le sacre du printemps*, which meticulously records the most important aspect of the work, this is in part due to the fact that reconstruction and remounting are intrinsically connected to the question of legacy and interpretation.

To begin with, I would like to reiterate the distinction between reconstruction and remounting and outline how they both relate to interpretation. In my mind, the exercise of reconstruction relates to building the works based on the text of the choreography and any available documentation. One view sees reconstructions as simulations of an original in the context of historical, political and cultural heritage (Franko 1-14).

Remounting, on the other hand, relates to the re-creation of an idea and concept encompassed in the choreography. Furthermore, interpretation moves beyond both remounting or reconstructing, and refers to the process of bringing the essence of a specific work to life through individuated reading of the text; that is to say, utilizing the artistic voices of current performers to interpret the work. Indeed, the relation between these concepts is temporal; interpretation is focused in the present creation of an experience and remounting or reconstruction relate more to respecting the past.

In the context of the present, both choreographer and dancer are constructing in a collaborative manner. This construction, the core of interpretation, is understood as being opposed to replicating a choreographic text without attention to the meaning and effect, which preoccupies mere imitation. As Franko explains it, interpretation endeavours to place the focus on creating the effect and bring meaning to the performance (Franko 136). In continuation, Franko considers the topic of perfection and repeatability in relation to Diderot, who wrestled with the imitative actor versus the emotional actor. Diderot favours the imitative actor whose success comes from subjugating themselves to the text like an automaton, who is then a catalyst for emotional response from the audience while remaining unfeeling (Diderot 61-65). Franko, however, concludes that perfect repeatability is not possible to achieve due to the fact of flawed humanity and individuation (147).

Retracing back to my three case studies, there are varying levels of difficulty in remounting. *Flesh and a Broken Whisper* lacked documentation because much of it had been lost in a flood. There was only a video and the choreographer's memory of the process and the work. On the other hand, *Shifting Silence* had the advantage of the

video, choreographer, record of design elements and the fact that it had been created more recently. The process for the third case study, remounting *The Nutcracker*, was challenging due to the limited time frame for the process however there were several sources for the dancers to draw upon: the dancer's transmission passed from one cast to another, the rehearsal director who is the keeper and updater of the text, as well as the choreographer who attended rehearsals in the final stages of remounting. In this we can see the importance of the knowledge carried within the body of dancer, rehearsal director and choreographer.

From my past experience as a dancer and choreographer, I see predictable patterns to the remounting process. For example, the final stages of preparation for performance adhere predictably to the final stages of interpretation. In the mimesis phase, frequent repetition of the text advances the learning process along with corrections of details, position, shape, and directionality. The embodiment phase invokes notes relating to relationships of space, energy, dynamics, and focus. Finally, the interpretation phase pares back the amount of notes and corrections and engages the dancers in their process of inhabiting and mining the text for the interpretive possibilities available to them. This final stage of the process involves facilitation of experience, expression and discovery as well as unleashing the dancers' identity within the frame of the work. This last phase is notable for the receding voice of the dramaturg and the amplification of the interpreter's voice. The relationship between choreographer, dancer and dramaturg varies relative to interpretation, but initially hinges on the personality and style of the choreographer and the dramaturg who have the responsibility of transmitting the essence of the text.

Robert Glumbek's view of remounting is revealed in his approach to preparing a work for re-staging. He demonstrates respect for the place of the dancer in the process and feels they play an important role in bringing the work to life. His process of remounting *Shifting Silence* was a short one. As mentioned in the overview of the case study, he focused his time on teaching the text of the choreography and explaining the musical phrasing of each section. It was important for him to relay details of the text for each section as well as to address specific logistical changes necessitated by limited theatre and backstage space in which the performances would take place. Change and adaptation was also required in the choreography, not only to accommodate the space but also to coincide with the attributes of the dancers. I refer to the example of the feature duet in the overview of *Shifting Silence* involving changes dictated by the physical differences between the original dancers and the remounting cast. For example, in the original cast the male dancer was considerable larger than his partner, making the slow sustained nature of a lift overhead well within his physical ability, whereas, in the new cast the two dancers' physiques were more closely matched, and this made it impossible for them to perform the lift in the same way. Therefore, Glumbek changed the lift to a 'carry' over one shoulder rather than a lift requiring the lifter's arms to be fully extended upwards. The importance of this lift in the choreographic text is that it is an intimate moment conveying a sense of care between the two dancers, and this intent was not altered by the change from a lift to a 'carry.' The new dancers were able to bring out this essence in the changed lift as they worked through its technicalities, and finally conveyed the intention of this moment through their physical relationship in the space.

Considering the previously illustrated change, I reflect on another example from *15 Heterosexual Duets*. In the most recent remount of the work James Kudelka attended rehearsals towards the end of the process when the dancers were preparing for the first performances. Two of the dancers performed a lift which consists of the man lifting a sitting woman up off the floor, high into the air; the woman then twists into a full revolution before being caught in a dip position on a diagonal lean. I had performed that lift many times and recalled some specific details, such as the woman sitting with one leg bent in an attitude position in front and the other leg bent behind her. When I learned it, the lift was described to me as pulling her up and back toward her back leg and then up into the air travelling backwards to perform the corkscrew-like twist diagonally in the air and finally the dip position. The new cast performed the lift in a very vertical fashion without traveling backwards or twisting diagonally. I spoke to James and said that I remembered details of the lift as it was done in the remount version that I had performed. James replied that he was pleased with the energy and amplitude of the way they were doing it because it fulfilled the intention of the choreography. Although considerably different from a technical and even textual point of view in terms of remount, the dancers fulfilled the essence and concept of the movement beautifully. Additionally, the alteration gave place to the personal voice of the artists to express the lift's essence through their understanding and interpretation of it.

In contrast to these last two examples, I recall another moment in *15 Heterosexual Duets* working with two very experienced interpreters on their duet. The man performs a sweeping *ronde de jambe* movement, sweeping his leg up over his partner as she crouches ball-like in front of him, and returns his leg swiftly back

underneath himself. In the choreographed text, he performs the *ronde de jambe* with arms lifted in a high *alongé* V-shape and head lifted with eyes focused skyward. As soon as his leg clears his partner she climbs up his torso with her hands, making contact three times before launching herself into a jump. As she jumps, he lifts her high in the air. It appears to me that he is a dreamer with his thoughts projected up in the clouds and she his anchor, pulling him back to earth while venturing skyward attempting to see what he saw up there. The lift comes immediately back down and she drops back down into a ball. The pair repeats this sequence several times in rapid succession. The challenge of this lift is that the male dancer cannot see his partner while he looks upwards. He has to rely on the feel her hands climbing his body in coordination with the musical timing to ascertain when the jump happens. In rehearsal, I encouraged the male dancer to achieve this high lift of the arms, sternum and head quickly. However, he found it challenging and wanted to do it differently. He was a meticulous dancer who analyzed and questioned motivations and intentions through every part of the choreography. I collaborated with his process by sharing from my experience of the piece and also offering suggestions and ideas. I was uniquely positioned to speak to this duet in detail because I had performed it many times and was familiar with the technical and physical challenges. In this instance he did not concede that my answer was sufficient, and he tried variations on the movement in order to embody it in a different way. In a dress rehearsal he lifted the arms into the high *alongé* line but chose to angle his torso and head downwards to focus on his partner while sweeping the leg over her. Convinced that he had found a good solution, he asked me what I thought. Since I felt it significantly changed the intention and meaning of the moment, I shared

the image of the couple balanced by the tension between sky (the dreamer, depicted through his upward gaze), and earth (the anchor, portrayed by her grounded position and climbing action up his body to briefly visit his celestial world). He responded positively to this imagery, and worked to perform the movement by orienting the focus skyward as indicated in the choreographic text.

The primary question of importance relating to these case descriptions is: what are we interpreting, and how? Or in other words, how can a change in movement affect the form of interpretation by the dancer and also in the spectator or the viewer, where the viewer is understood as either the choreographer or the audience? As an example, Glumbek discusses his concept for *Shifting Silence* in the context of his autobiographical experience: his personal interpretation and observation of aging, his changing state, and his choices around social engagement and boundaries pertaining to personal and public space. Simultaneously, as dramaturg for the remounting of *Shifting Silence*, I contextualize the same concepts through my personal experience. Taking into account that I am a man who has recently turned fifty, I empathize with the questions Glumbek raises about the place of interpersonal relationships in life as we age and selectivity regarding the quantity and quality of those relations and the place they occupy. I have a personal interpretation of these sentiments informed by my history of living, losing, redefining and evolving through my own trials. Therefore, my dramaturgy of his piece adds a layer of reading to the remounting process. In Glumbek's absence, I asked questions of the dancers and coached their interpretation through the lens of my experience and a distillation of what I understand of his text. Additionally, frank discussions with Glumbek prior to his departure put the question of my personal voice

into focus. I raised the question of interpretation and dramaturgical choices that would need to be made in his absence. I wanted the discussion to address my understanding that there would be inevitable decisions I would make in the process of preparing the remount while at the same time respecting his intentions for the work. My own experience presented a layer of intertextuality which came to bear on the process informed by my vantage point of the concept for the piece.

My goal and intention as dramaturg is to allow my own voice as well as those of the dancers to appear in the realized choreography. This approach allows for personal choice to come to bear on the choreography and interpretive intentions. Retracing back to this concept which I introduced earlier, the question of personal voice can be couched in dialogue with an understanding of intertextuality as a factor in creative expression. Intertextuality is addressed in literature and in the practice of writing as the collaboration between various texts usually focusing around a certain subject. A text can refer to literature, music, visual art, choreography or other expressionistic creative medium. Accordingly, the term choreographer can replace references to writers or creators. The choreographer is a historical person, because s/he is necessarily influenced by personal experience and to varying degrees the history of choreography which comes before them. Philosopher Roland Barthes expresses it this way; “The grain is the body in the voice as it sings, in the hand as it writes, in the limb as it executes” (188).

Furthermore, I would like to broaden the concept of intertextuality between choreographer and dramaturg and contextualize it in the public space. Thinking about public space, intertextuality is defined between the viewer and the work of art. The

viewer is the audience as is the reader of the text. In dance, the text is not static. Choreography is viewed, performed, and interpreted by the dancer(s) as well. Therefore, the intertextual nature of a choreographic work can be understood as something in constant flux where interpretation and meanings change and are susceptible to the interaction between the performer, choreographer and audience. From this relationship, the question arises: Understanding the stage as an intertextual space, what is personal in the public space of the stage? Or, how is the personal voice articulated and perceived within the interaction of the choreography and the public space? French philosopher Jacques Ranciere, in his book *The Emancipated Spectator*, states that the artist and the thinker have sought to transform the spectator into an active agent, and the spectacle into a communal performance. The relationship between the choreographer, dancer and audience is an intertextual interpretation of the spectator. Or, for Aristotle, the public is the construct of individual voices creating a collective identity. Accordingly, public discourse through the choreographer's work brings the personal to the public. Conversely, the choreographer's craft is informed by the public space and the public's response. The audience can perceive and interpret the personal through the expression of the aesthetics of the choreographer; understanding aesthetics not only from the classical viewpoint, but also from a conceptual perspective, as in literature or poetry.

The intertextual nature of the artist, as one who brings the past into focus with the present, informs the artist's state of being, approaches to the working process, and the performative experience along the journey through mimesis, embodiment and interpretation. Change is inevitable and offers a creative opportunity, like a pregnant

state of possibility. Consequently, interpretation can be defined as intertextuality itself, because it is ultimately the relation between the choreographer and the text, but also the dancer as well as the viewer and the text.

Conversely, the relation between interpretation and adaptation is different. In the scenario of *Shifting Silence*, dancers were presented with the text at the commencement of the work. Once the basic elements were in place I gave the dancers the space to take the text and evolve with it to build their own voice within it. I set about creating the environment for them to take ownership of the material and discover their interpretation of it for two primary reasons: in order to respect the choreographer's desire to see the dancers take ownership of the material, and due to my own beliefs and philosophical point of view regarding mimesis, personal voice and artistic license.

The concept of interpretation is analyzed through a micro movement in a very physical choreography: for example, Justine's breathing scene and moments of stillness in *Flesh and Broken Whisper*. Justine's physical journey evolves directly from the text. The emotional and energetic essence of the piece demands embodiment through the breathing moment and the still sections. The stillness in particular contains the seeds of this essence. These moments in the choreography where the dancer takes a pause raise questions of existence, a mode of survival, and are moments when the decision of reinventing oneself to go with life is taken place. For this purpose, I provided Justine with imagery and movement information to work with and then the space to explore and discover the tension and meaning in the piece. For example, I proposed the imagine of a stressed and pacing animal in the crawling scene. Other examples are: seeing parts of the body as separate satellite entities in the breaking scene; or that the

whole piece is a snippet where we do not see the beginning or ending, but only a cross section of the intense journey that she navigates while balancing both frailty and power. Justine reflected that the use of imagery was valuable to her interpretative process and performance.

However, the phase of interpretation played out differently in *The Nutcracker* case study. In examining *The Snow Scene*, I observed that the work is highly reliant on the text of the choreography. The text involves dynamic movement, travelling a great deal in the space, dynamic changes of direction, and crisp sweeping movement emulating qualities of snow in the wind. The dancers' interpretation takes shape as they master the physical tasks of the choreography. The time frame given to the dancers is quite limited: only six days of rehearsal before the opening performances. According to the rehearsal director, this had been standard for several years due to the schedule parameters of the company.

I observed the new cast members in the imitation phase. I also observed a shift towards the embodiment phase on the third day of rehearsal as they addressed the spacing in numerous travelling lift sequences. The fast process is inevitable with tight deadlines. The dancers moved into a greater sense of control of the material and interpretation around the fourth day of rehearsals as they mastered the material and were able to achieve the tasks of the text: physicality, coordination, speed, coverage of space, and musicality. There was a significant shift in the quality of tension in their bodies and the kinetic flow of energy informing their use of space and physical relationship one to another as they confronted the physical tasks which are challenging to accomplish.

The notion of accomplishing choreographic tasks reminds me of a personal experience from the piece *Vile Parody of Address* by William Forsythe. A significant focus of the material is on attempting to accomplish physical tasks, some of which are not physically possible but the act of the attempt reveals the movement and the essence of the piece. In one example, I assume a deep lunge position with my front leg bent and back leg straight, similar to a fencing lunge position, and the instruction I am given is to try and shift my weight in order to align my ischial tuberosities¹⁰, or sit bones, so they are parallel to the stage left wall. The action is not possible but the attempt produces a sliding angular movement sideways. On the other hand, the tasks in *Nutcracker's Snow Scene* are quite achievable but not without the intensity of struggle which seems typical of Kudelka's choreographic vision. The additional material Kudelka added to the trio in the rehearsal adds vibrancy when the dancers attempt to achieve and interpret the new tasks presented. To harken back to *15 Heterosexual Duets*, the material is complex and arduous. I distinctly recall the choreographer identifying effort in achieving the physical tasks as imbuing the text with the quality of each couple's complete interdependence to achieve the physical tasks as integral to the vibrant essence of the work. I liken it to a three-legged race where each runner has one leg tied to the other's and a symbiotic effort is the only route to success.

The interpretation of the choreographic text can be molded, enforced, by signature movements or idiosyncratic movements. Glumbek's piece contains common threads of movement and gesture: the grounded quality of movement, use of deep pli  , aggressive quality of the arms, and specific arm and hand gestures. The specificities

¹⁰ Ischial tuberosity is a literal anatomical reference to the protuberances at the bottom of the pelvis. They are casually referred to as 'sit-bones' because they are the bony protuberances one feels when sitting on a chair.

are at the essence of the text while being rediscovered and questioned by the dancer. A specific example is the gesture of the right hand pressing through the air in front of the face with the palm facing left while the head turns to the right. I see this gesture as an abstraction of pushing back the curtain of identity to look into the past. Glumbek describes it as pushing back against demands and obligations made by others and by life to look at the space one wants to open up in one's personal space by choice.

Another example is the hand gestures of the lead male dancer in *Shifting Silence* indicating the walls on either side of him. He presses his hands against an imaginary surface (in the original this was the literal surface of the walls which made up the set design). These surfaces defined his personal space and represented a key image employing the delineation of space to reveal the identity and concept of the work. I feel it is the responsibility of the dramaturg to create an environment to facilitate clarity for the performers. Equipping them with the relevant information about the work and then charge them with the task of infusing their perception and interpretation into the work, respects the choreography and the performer. There is a degree of ignorance required, and here I am referring to Bojana Cvejics' use of the term 'ignorance' in the discussion about dramaturgy and the friendship between dramaturg and choreographer where she states, "The kind of friendship I am invoking here begins with ignorance—not about what the two can exchange between them.....but the ignorance about the work to be made." (46). I believe that this type of opening to the unknown has a place in the interpretation phase because it creates the possibility for the artist's voice to invigorate and bring life to the remounted work.

6. Conclusion

The previous chapters examine the intertextual nature of the collaborative process involving remounting and reconstructing works created and performed in the past. This ongoing reinvigoration of dance works points to the evolutionary nature of choreography inevitably impacted by the characteristics, histories and technical backgrounds of individual dancers, dramaturg, and choreographer. In bringing past works into the present, the rehearsal process plays a crucial role in determining the quality of performance work. As dramaturg and/or rehearsal director, I look to the intertextual nature of dancers' backgrounds during the choreographic process. Thus, for me, the rehearsal process during remounting is a collaborative social system versus a system of dictation and repetition. In this, I believe that the remounting and reconstruction processes benefit greatly from a decentralized approach which requires adaptability and responsiveness to the subtle nuances of individual personalities and physiognomies. Indeed, evolution, flux and mutability are unavoidable characteristics of the creative process.

Furthermore, remounting could be understood not only as a collaborative process between the choreographer, dramaturg, and dancers, but also comprise an intertextual collaboration between past and present. In other words, the goal of remounting and reconstruction is to recapture an essence from the past while at the same time reference the present. Thus one has to bear in mind that this essence will be embodied in present bodies. This means that in order to recapture original aspects of

choreographic work, the dramaturg has to reference and contextualize the piece in the present.

I extrapolate further in the discussion and contextualize reconstruction, remounting and construction within the frame of the three phases of assimilation. Mimesis is the phase where the interpreter is subjugated to external parameters to reconstruct a literal replication of the other in order to begin to access the essence of the text. The evolution to the embodiment phase that follows is a process of remounting, or rather mounting, the text onto the new body. The final phase is where the artist constructs their interpretation of the choreographic text. Due to the interconnected nature of these processes, I believe that introducing the phases of mimesis, embodiment and interpretation in concrete and structured terms in planning the rehearsal process leads to productive outcomes. These terms serve as a guide to the inherent nature of remounting and reconstruction as well as the challenges faced by the dramaturg and/or rehearsal director.

Therefore, the contribution of this work to the dance field on the micro scale is the immediate benefit to the dancers and choreographer by having a dramaturg share the observer's viewpoint on the work through the three phases of the rehearsal process. In doing this, s/he opens a constructive and informative dialogue between choreographer and performers. It also creates a framework for the rehearsal director to facilitate an effective rehearsal process, because its three constituent phases define expectations for the dancers and identify a chronology through which to navigate the journey from studio to the stage. An understanding of the phases of mimesis, embodiment and interpretation enables all participants of the remount process to

strategize their approach to the work and have a point of reference for contextualization.

On a larger scale, the above research, description and analysis articulate a system of pedagogy for the rehearsal process and contribute to the available historical record of choreographic work in the Canadian canon.

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Appendix A

- Sample notes from rehearsals of *Flesh and A Broken Whisper*
- Images from the original and the remounted performances of the choreography.
The images are taken from performance DVDs and due to the low light conditions of the lighting design the quality is limited.
- DVD recordings of the premiere performance and the remounting performance of *Flesh and a Broken Whisper*. *The composed/edited music includes treatments of other composers' work such as Richard Strauss, and Kronos Quartet. Original recordings and specific details of the composed music are lost.*

Appendix B

- Sample notes from rehearsals of *Shifting Silence*
- Transparencies of the remounted version laid overtop the original scenography.
- Images from the original and the remounted performances of the choreography.
The images are taken from performance DVDs and due to the low light conditions of the lighting design the quality is limited.

Appendix C

- Sample notes from rehearsals of *The Nutcracker Snow Trio*

Appendix D

- Program excerpts from three case studies. Please note that my name is omitted in the program for *Shifting Silence*. This was an oversight by the printer. However there is a reference to my involvement on the inside cover of the program and my bio is included as well.
- Reflections from Ziyian Kwan and Justine Comfort in reference to *Flesh and a Broken Whisper*.

Flesh and a Broken Whisper

Sept 2013

History of the piece

- created Vancouver 2001,
- performed Dancing on the Edge Festival
- Studio 303 Mtl
- Vancouver International Dance Festival
- Zed TV - CBC TV

Concept - Autotomy - the poem

informed movement vocabulary, emotion,
theatricality, lighting, costume, music,
intensity, subtle drama

Abstracted gesture

Original work: Ziyi + I in studio was
a meeting of 2 languages physically,
intellectually, artistically.

I didn't always understand her,
but I trusted her.

The process produced a new language
for me.

New Process: Considers differences in time,
location, interpretation, changes in my identity

Flesh...

Aug 27/13

Remount

Revisiting my original concept & intent
through Justine.

Reminded of Ziyi's Impact

I see the beginning of Justine's impact
- where will it go?

I see the aspects of my voice which
remain through the energy + some
specific textural qualities + details
of movement.

+ subtlety

+ ambiguity of emotion

+ ambiguity of shape in movement
(not overly formed in a dancerly
manner, but informed by
sensation + state of being)

Flesh...

First viewing of 2002 DVD

memories:

what I wanted to see/communicate
in the movement vocab

what Ziyi did w/ the material

I let go of preconceptions w/ the
face of Ziyi's interpretive
choices.

I didn't always want to let go
but had to for 2 reasons:

1. differences in our dance backgrounds
the movement patterns in the body.
2. She was so compelling

Flesh...

1st full work through

Sept 4/13

0:00 First wave - appear suddenly
out of nowhere
- we are witnessing you in the
middle of something. mid way into
an arduous journey. (Not the start or end)

* texture of lick-walks - hips, waist,
knees & feet - sensual - experience
the sensations. (loss, crackling leaves)
- in & out action of the articulating leg.

1:15 - 2:40 Swan Lake scene - begin breaking
(Fragile-yet staring down your goal)

3:00 Physical distortion - segmenting/breaking
(-you choose to break) body

4:40 come back above water
out of murkiness - thoughts clear again

6:00 Build - drive to 1st climax

* Sitting/breathing - bigger, physical, expose your state

Music: 1st wave - catching her in mid-sentence
- music w/ some sense of distortion, vague

Swan Lake - vague sound - not clear motif

Breaking - music clear & stripped down
(Frenetic Beethoven motif?)

Flesh...

Rehearsal

Sept 28/13

Justine

- pace 1st diag → energy
- catch the lunge & then swell up
then after pause resume → energy
to ← D.S.P.
- erotic energy w/ wrist chop
- dive piqué att./trip: head tucked,
then opened up into piqué
- arabesque bob - a felt gesture
- add new ~~strut~~ shunt legs after
hand-dance & 2nd leg fall.
- Ronde fall - leg weight
- landing onto hand-dance ^{satellite} - travel
to landing.
- quality of getting up into exposing ribs.
after 3rd penché - ^{smooth} subtle opening of
ribs to spill guts.
- more weight in penché
- final hand-dance bigger animation
- final All-fours energy - frail/determined
weak/strong, exhausted/still standing



Flesh and a Broken Whisper, Vancouver 2002. Dancer: Ziyian Kwan



Flesh and a Broken Whisper, Toronto 2014. Dancer: Justine Comfort



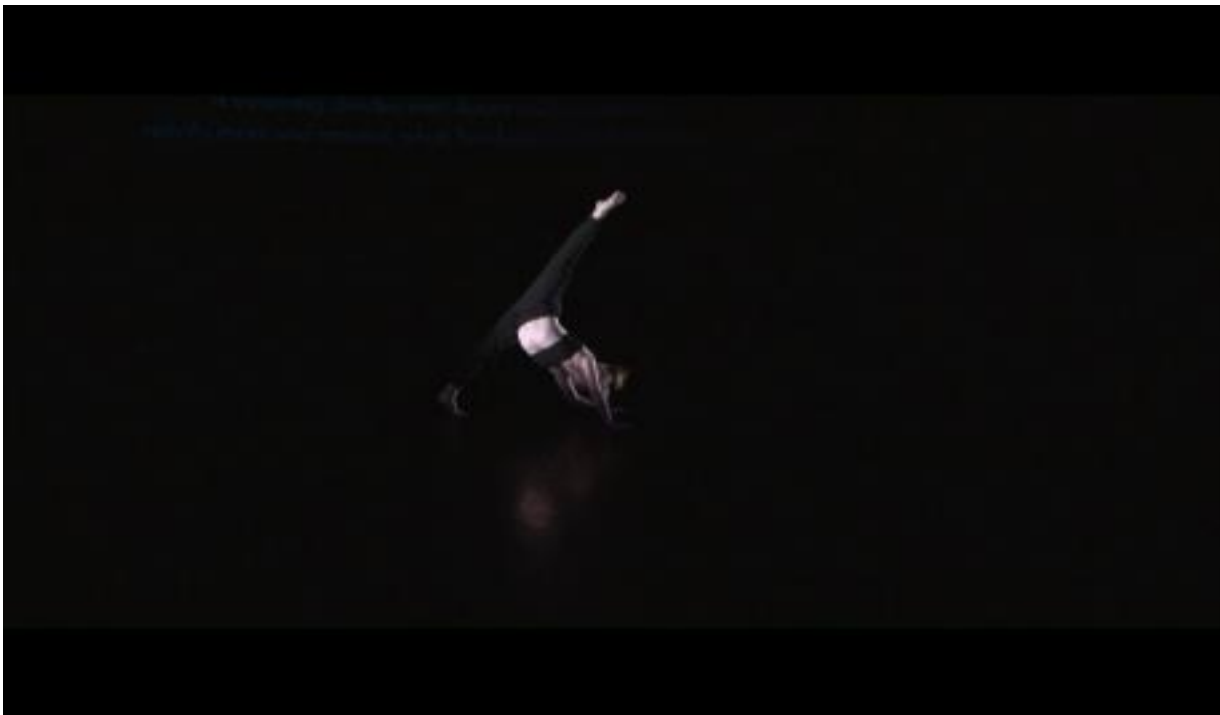
Flesh and a Broken Whisper, Vancouver 2002. Dancer: Ziyian Kwan



Flesh and a Broken Whisper, Toronto 2014. Dancer: Justine Comfort



Flesh and a Broken Whisper, Vancouver 2002. Dancer: Ziyian Kwan



Flesh and a Broken Whisper, Toronto 2014. Dancer: Justine Comfort



Flesh and a Broken Whisper, Vancouver 2002. Dancer: Ziyian Kwan



Flesh and a Broken Whisper, Toronto 2014. Dancer: Justine Comfort

Shifting Silence Scene Breakdown

0:00 - curtain opens, 'T' walks around
the ~~rest~~ inside of rectangle of light
- "The House"

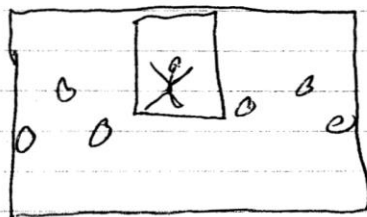
(1)

0:24 'T' turns, looks up stage = 1st music cue
& Adio begins

2:15 'T' starts arm & head shakes

2:30 'T' concludes shakes = cue dancers
entrance (x)

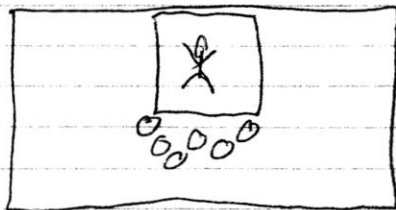
Dancers assume positions outside
the House & observe 'T'



3:28 Solo concludes

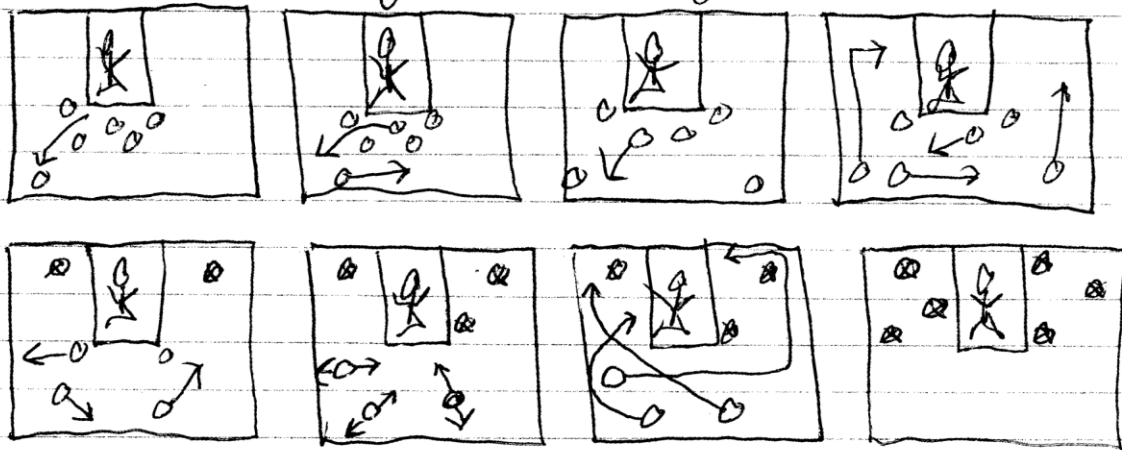
(2)

"Convergence" - dancers gather in front of
house (new music overlaps ~~the previous~~
Bach)

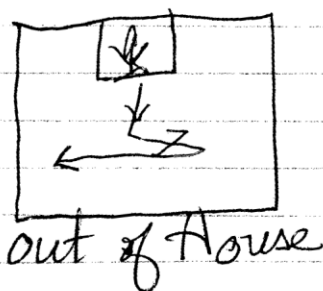


Scene Breakdown cont.

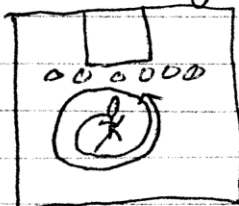
3:41 overlapping solos begin



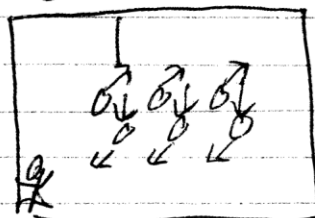
5:30 T solo leaving the house & counter balancing the group & space
* rectangle of light cue-cut in 1/2.



out of House



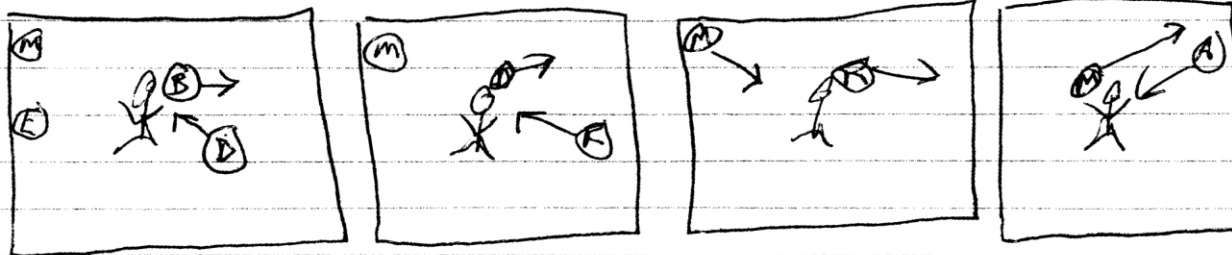
"CONVERGENCE"
2



group section

rectangle
light
cut

7:44 "Intervention" Duets



Aug. 23/13

Opening Solo

- music cue = when he stops walking,
& looks up stage

Intent:

IDENTITY

- R.G. - feel who you are when touching
self, looking into your hands etc.

**Public
Private
Space**

- feel the confinement of the walls &
space when you map the interior
of "House" w/ your body (arms, hands)

"Convergence" - group ~~of~~ characters from
world put ^{him} outside. He pushes back &
retreats inside
(new solo starts every 32 counts - full pace)

* R.G./J.O. discussion: looking at DVD R.G.
sees interpretive choices dancers made which
departed from choreography.

• R.G. - "...but it has to be there to right?"
• J.O. - if movement altered is meaning
changed/altered?

* I observe initial process adheres to original
choreography as much as possible
however personal idiosyncracies of
cast members seems to alter
choreo w/out their awareness.

R.G./J.B. meeting

Choreo & tech notes

Sept 5/13

TECH

'T' head/arm shake - from arms,
+ big enough to involve head

cabriote timing on music accent

All - hands under chin/clap/wave
* bigger gesture across face
- dynamic

mvmt must have volume &
weight - grounding

'T' - know music for circle
walk - important timing
cue for group

Group focus on 'T'
- distraction in
"convergence #2"

R.G. - "They want to get
him out of that space"

• 2 specials to create
"House" -

+ TOPS & FOTH for face
- 1/2 metre wide
u.s. of CC to backdrop

• sides when grp enters
• as 'A' starts solo
lights up on D.S. area

• 'T' stops U.S. looks
at small House,
turns away -
fade House out.

• House back in
during S to S

• joggling -
T walks into House
then fade to black
* give him 5 sec
to clear in blk/out.

R.G./J.C. meeting cont.

T/R duet

End of trio - guys not ~~to~~
too far U.S. so
diagonal pulls towards
House.

T lift R on shoulder
timed w/ end of music
- walk in silence

Duet = dialogue of friendship,
connection, responsiveness

R looks at 'T' as he
continues - supportive

3 steps in lift before
music cue.

Duet mostly contained in
House.

Conclusion T goes towards
group while they are
shifting among
themselves.

Tension builds in body
- anticipation

* we need House taped on
floor for rehearsal - OZ

LIGHT

- T lifts R = ~~cue~~
for 2ND House
special to return -
- sharp focused
special + sides
+ tops to fill space.
- J.C. to decide
intensities
"It's about what's
happening in House."

End Duet - 2 options

#1. when R
squeezes T down
stage House
fades out.
T leaves Up stage
House, U.S. House
fades out.

#2.
U.S. House
stays for group
section - see if
it's possible w/
dancers need for
space.

Shifting Silence

(Light & Sound)

(Oct 1/13)

- Light up (Full corridor "house")
Tyler walks US as
Curtain opens

Corridor - $\frac{1}{2}$ US of CC, $\frac{1}{2}$ m from back wall, 2m wide

T1 - MUSIC

1st track as Ty comes DS then turns to face US

2:30
2:35

- Sides come up after Head/Arm shake which is when dancers start to enter L & R.

3:26

- Ty a la 2nd & walk US, turn step DS & stand = DS square fade out

- more sides as dancers gather CC

- ↑ DS area light as Annisa walks DS & starts solo

5:58 ▷ Ry stops at foot of US □ (after 1st solo)
 as he turns away
 = US □ fades out
 (x)uge look for intervention (US darker)

full □ fades in after balls left
 + S to DS jogging

M stop as he jogs US - DS light fades out

M T2 He leaves US L □ fades out
 give him time to leave

▷ Then cue music + DS light
 10:55 ish for Ry / B duo + Mami

14:52 = Ty catches Ry + Ry clap =
 US □ fades in

DS □ ▷ Ty lifts Ry on shoulder = DS □

M Trk ends & they walk into □

M T3 Ty walks US, turns to look at Ry
 = Cue music

For duo clear cut focused □
 others are in dim light - observers

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Shifting Silence (Toronto 2013). Choreography: Robert Glumbek. Dancers: ProArteDanza

91

92



Shifting Silence (Mannheim 2011). Choreography: Robert Glumbek. Dancers: Ballet Mannheim

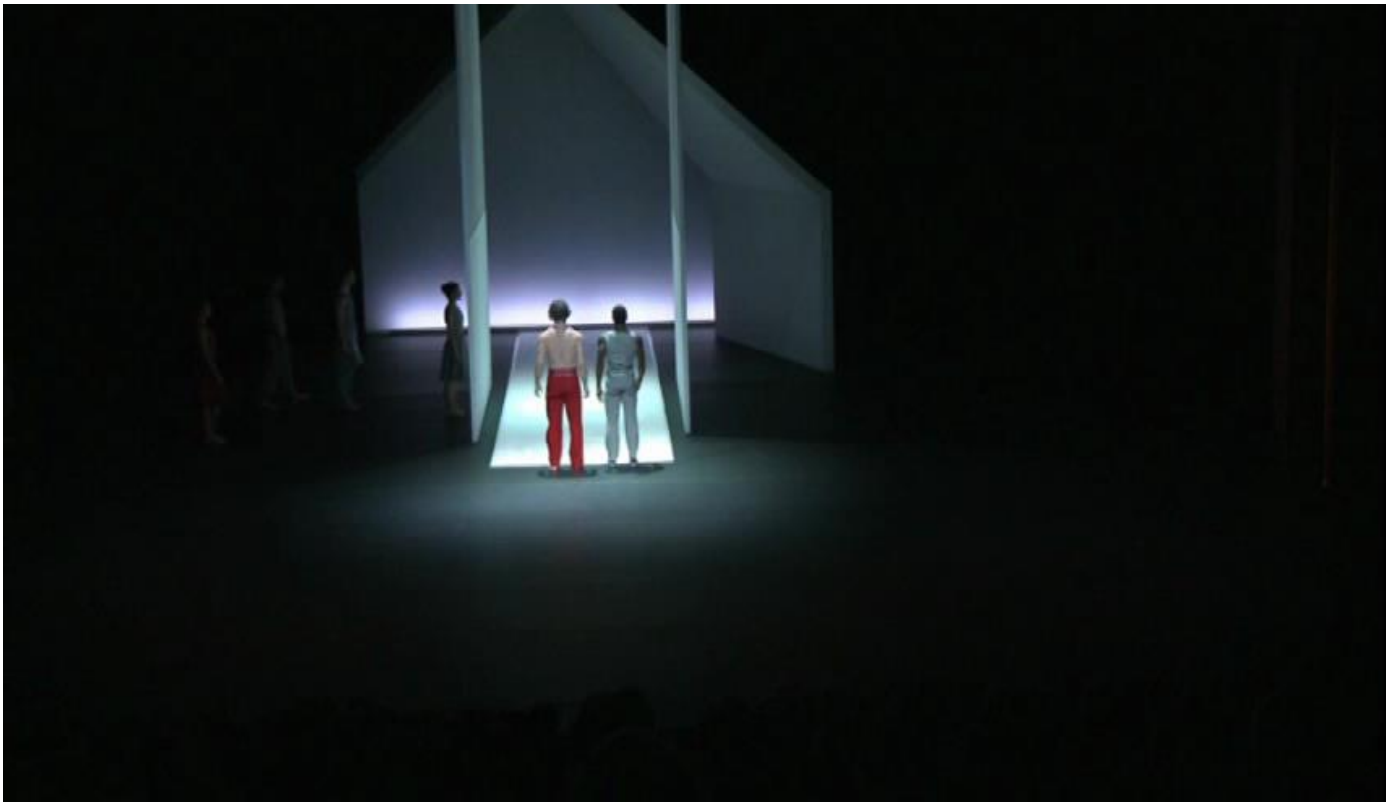
92



Shifting Silence (Manheim 2011) Choreography: Robert Glumbek. Dancers: Ballet Manheim



Shifting Silence (Toronto 2013). Choreography: Robert Glumbek. Dancers: ProArteDanza



Shifting Silence (Manheim 2011) Choreography: Robert Glumbek. Dancers: Ballet Manheim



Shifting Silence (Toronto 2013). Choreography: Robert Glumbek. Dancers: ProArteDanza



Shifting Silence (Manheim 2011) Choreography: Robert Glumbek. Dancers: Ballet Manheim



Shifting Silence (Toronto 2013). Choreography: Robert Glumbek. Dancers: ProArteDanza

NBOC Nutcracker

Dec 2, 2013

Case Study #3

Snow Trio

55 min rehearsal

Female - new to the role
- young

Knows basic material

Repetition immediately corrects nuances & details
which are missing
- opening source position - no ending feet

specific details of foot work for her home
particular ~~the~~ nuances
- as leg descends from 90° F
partner turns her, her glossy leg (R)
it must be left behind so
it becomes over crossed it is an
exaggerated "in the leg" cd pass
w/ bend in the leg.

Male dancers - 1 new
- 1 danced role before

SPECIFICITY of JK details
integral to the text

2

Trid partnering

1st rehearsal - chunky & bumpy
as dancers negotiate the details
of partnering

- she must put foot down F
at end of sequence to stop weight from
to make arms work & avoid
backing up into partner.

2 men must coordinate 4 hands
at waist & pivot lifts

- 1 anchors & balances pivot
while other accelerates to take
lift around corner

2 ~~men~~ men must coordinate 1 arm
lift so they each lift her at
arm-pit evenly & lower her evenly

Repetiteur coaches details of mount vocab
- the leg battements there on a
steep change so the fouetté to all
finishes facing F.

" also dramaturgy the role
- know queen runs upstairs
w/ men following where she goes
so she is the purs as a royal
so not worrying where they go

3

detail of 3 pictures

- 1 man goes under their arms
 then she must step DSR to get
 ahead of him then sharp step USR
 for jlt left.

Repetition relay into From Chorus

- the lady b. jlt must ~~turn~~ arrive
 facing US, so we see the full
 circle of the turn w/ leg extended to
 ceiling framed in center of turn

quantitative movement quality

- two arms open then R sweeps
 all the way across & pulls into
 circular turn
- head is always to the arm, the only
 time the head is front is when jlt
- all the movement is the drop allegro section
 goes one into the other ... ~~quantitative~~ ^{quantitative} ~~basque~~
 falls into step b, falls into chorus ...

Repetition identifies specific spacing for
 two negotiating patterns of mvmt + space

Case Study 3

Snow Trio

Tues Dec 3, 2013

CAST B
other cast (watching & marking yesterday)

Task - coordinate the 3 bodies
in a running lift sequence

- in space to travel
 - in quality to keep dynamic of transitory & floating quality
 - in time w/ each other
 - in architecture w/ music - the text of the choreo
- each moment is choreographed
in the text

Repetition has to know the text
in detail to convey the full
text to dancers.

At this stage TC stops and the end
of each 16 counts to give details
& remind of notes given
- Dancers appear to achieve about
3/4 of the details of their own text
and less (2/3) of the details involving
synchronicity & coordinating their 3
bodies in space & transitory.

missing one textual element often
causes a loss of detail meaning, &
sometimes causes discord in the trio.
they start to make each element work
together

"Pripod" series $\frac{2}{3} \frac{1}{4}$

the triangle has specific facing for the 3 points
more traveling required to set up Δ at the
quarter marks of the space SR & SL

Dancers recognizing elements that help in timing -
One speaks about timing - the need to get
to a certain place in space faster or
order to make the partnership of the performers
work on balance.

The remount contains layers of movement detail,
technical detail, special details, patterns,
group architecture

Intertextual relationship between classical
canon and contemporary aesthetics

~~It has~~ Layers

- 1 - individual body part/steps
- 2 - facing, arms, heads, spacing
- 4 - dynamic quality
- 3 - timing - music
- 5 - coordinating w each other

NBC Nutcracker

Dec 5/3

Snow Trio w/ OTTMANN - Rudelka

Focus - fulfilling spacing, 2 men w/ each other +
in the space travelling

reliance on the text

JK adds ^{new} choreo to last snow queen solo
adds ~~2~~ fir in arabs on each side
+ additional embosses foot work and footwork
release their prep for lift exit.
JK - to make it more exciting

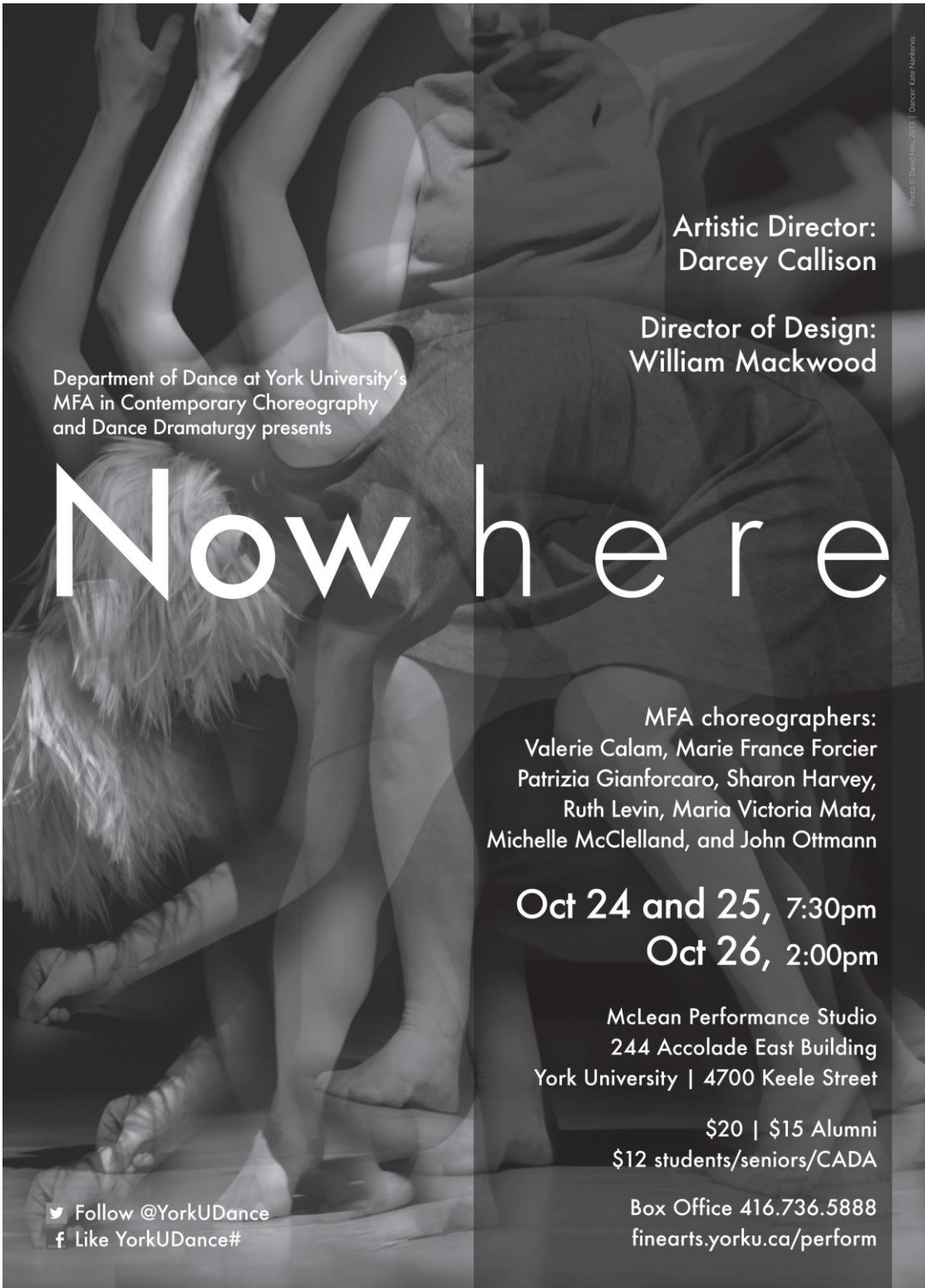
JK adds sentence for the ott in 1st promenade
+ guys doing only 1/2 promenade instead of full
+ end up on correct side after 2nd promenade

JK - ~~had~~ ^{passed} it down but now not enough
going on.

adds 3rd jete en tournant to prepare dingo
starts de la queue jete dingo.

"The rings, the rings..." discussing the previous
reactions from A. Staff when J.K. rings to choreo
(some tension implied)

As dancers do text in the body. Physical
text not understood.



Department of Dance at York University's
MFA in Contemporary Choreography
and Dance Dramaturgy presents

Artistic Director:
Darcey Callison

Director of Design:
William Mackwood

Nowhere

MFA choreographers:
Valerie Calam, Marie France Forcier
Patrizia Gianforcaro, Sharon Harvey,
Ruth Levin, Maria Victoria Mata,
Michelle McClelland, and John Ottmann

Oct 24 and 25, 7:30pm
Oct 26, 2:00pm

McLean Performance Studio
244 Accolade East Building
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UNIVERSITY **U**

Flesh and a Broken Whisper

Choreographer: John Ottmann

Interpreter: Justine Comfort

Lighting Design: William Mackwood

Composer: Erik Geddis

Costume Design: Raegan Moore

MFA Supervisors: Professor Darcey Callison, Professor Carol Anderson

On a vast stage,
grounding through the
legs into a suspended
turn which spirals
to a gentle landing
on the knee with
arms retracted and
immediately presses
back up out of the
ground into a balance
on the knuckles
of one foot with
arms extended in
a downward curve
forward and back with
the torso curled over
a lifted leg. The balance
feels so aligned that I
can't get down for a
long moment before
the weight shifts
enough to drop out
and move on....



John Ottmann's career encompasses the roles of dancer, choreographer, teacher, rehearsal director and artistic director. He has garnered a reputation as a highly versatile dance artist and inspiring mentor known for pushing and crossing the boundaries of ballet and contemporary dance.

This piece is a remounted choreography, originally performed in 2001 by Ziyian Kwan (Vancouver). John restages this work as part of thesis research on the dramaturgy of reconstruction, adaptation and identity.

pro^{arte}danza®
PASSION IN PERFORMANCE



season

Roberto Campanella, Artistic Director

2013

October 2-5

Fleck Dance Theatre

the program

Shifting Silence (2011 Mannheim, Germany)

Canadian Premiere

Choreography: Robert Glumbek

Music: J.S. Bach, *Senking*

Original Lighting Design: Damian Chmielarz

Adapted Lighting Design: Oz Weaver

Original Costume Design: Jürgen Kirner

Adapted Costume Design: Raegan Moore

Dancers: Tyler Gledhill, Mami Hata, Ben Landsberg, Ryan Lee, Delphine Leroux, Erin Poole, Anisa Tejpar

"When we cannot bear to be alone, it means we do not properly value the only companion we will have from birth to death." – Eda LeShan

— 20 minute intermission —

Beethoven's 9th—3rd Movement

World Premiere

Choreography: Roberto Campanella and Robert Glumbek

Music: Ludwig van Beethoven

Lighting Design: Oz Weaver

Costume Coordinator: Anisa Tejpar

Dancers: Justin de Luna, Tyler Gledhill, Mami Hata, Ben Landsberg, Ryan Lee, Delphine Leroux, Erin Poole, Anisa Tejpar

Working on a musical masterpiece is always a daunting task and it is thought by some that it is all but impossible to choreograph to Beethoven's music. We are inspired by this particular Symphony because we sincerely believe it suggests a physicality that pairs perfectly with the type of movement aesthetic embodied by ProArteDanza. We approached the choreographic challenge with great respect to this master work. The resulting piece pays homage to this incomparable music.

— 5 minute pause —

Fractals: a pattern of chaos (2011)

Choreography: Guillaume Côté

Music: *Venetians Snares*

Original Lighting Design: Arun Srinivasan

Lighting Director: Oz Weaver

Original Costume Design: Deanna Sciortino

Adapted Costume Design: Raegan Moore

Dancers: Val Calam, Justin de Luna, Tyler Gledhill, Mami Hata, Ben Landsberg, Ryan Lee, Delphine Leroux, Erin Poole

Fractals occur in nature in the development of snowflakes, flowers, or clouds to name a few examples. Both strict order and unpredictable influence are integral to the formation of fractals. This idea of order and chaos, along with, shape and pattern, is reflected in the complexity and variation of artistic creation, in this case, in the physical expression of this theme in choreography.



presents

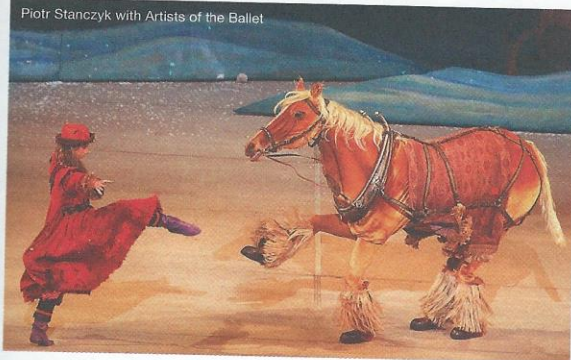
The Nutcracker

December 14, 2013—January 4, 2014

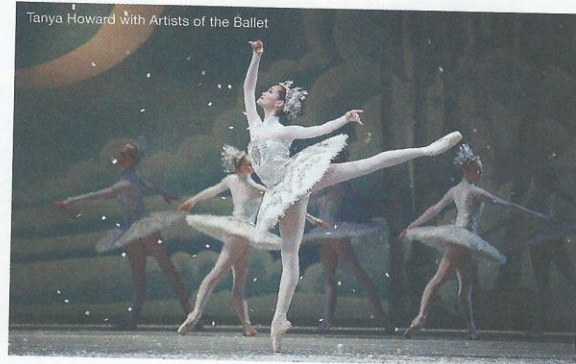
The National Ballet's sumptuous, comical, touching and spellbinding version of E.T.A. Hoffmann's Christmas tale was created in 1995 and has been enthralling audiences – especially children – ever since. It is a refreshingly traditional version of the story, replete with the details of childhood dreams and the appeal of fantasy, a ballet gloriously designed and costumed and brimming with affection for and insight into the passage from childhood to maturity that all children make.

Re-setting the story to Imperial Russia, with its simple folk customs and its overwhelming opulence, choreographer James Kudelka allows full rein to both his instincts for everyday beauty and dazzling spectacle, for natural wonder and dreamlike astonishment, all conveyed in an array of breathtaking choreography. The entire production is a glittering, enchanting gem of a ballet, a work that is at once deeply familiar and forever new.

Piotr Stanczyk with Artists of the Ballet



Tanya Howard with Artists of the Ballet



Choreography and Libretto: James Kudelka, O.C.
 Music: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
 Set and Costume Design: Santo Loquasto
 Lighting Design: Jennifer Tipton

The Nutcracker is made possible by generous financial support from production underwriters Sandra Pitblado & Jim Pitblado, C.M., Lawrence & Ann Heisey and an anonymous friend of the National Ballet.



**Prices guaranteed
 until November 1
 only. Check
national.ballet.ca
 for details.**

A Reflection on *Flesh and a Broken Whisper* by Ziyian Kwan

When John Ottmann asked me to share my memories of dancing *Flesh and a Broken Whisper* with Justine Comfort, such a flood of images came to mind that it would have resulted in an epic novel put into writing full of specific details.

In 2002, when I commissioned John to create the solo for me, it was with the intentions of a contemporary dancer who wanted to become versed in ballet vocabulary through the articulation of choreography. The process that ensued became something quite other. With more than a decade to reflect, I realize that the process with John was integral to my accumulated experiences as a dancer, a vital part of the collage that has imbued my artistic practice with small epiphanies that are ephemeral and also foundational to cultivating a beginner's mind.

The collaboration with John was totally simpatico. That is not to say that it was easy nor that the creative meeting was immediately fluid. Rather, in any given moment of an artist's life there are modes of expression that we aspire towards. If the encounter between artists allows for the possibility that what we aspire for can be pre-cognitive, then the collaboration becomes an opening into the unknown. In this territory, inspiration blooms and the physical discourse between choreographer and dancer is a reflection of questions asked and responses formed. This is my memory of working with John on *Flesh and a Broken Whisper*.

In sharing with Justine some of what I learnt through the process, this is

what came out:

Every moment of attention and rigour that dancer and choreographer share in the studio is present on the performance stage. You can always see the process in the finished product. The imprint is profound: the rich history of choreographic details, the technique, the discovery of states and emotional landscapes, the dialogue between interpreter and creator. The process becomes a map in space and I learned to draw that map with my body so that each time I danced the solo, pathways became more intricate with myriad streams of expression to choose and embody.

When I danced the piece, sometimes I couldn't quite put my finger on the story that I was telling. But when the sensation in my body aligned with the ideas that formed the arc of piece, I could trust that the dance had resonance. And in less inspired moments, by simply focusing on all the details that were addressed in rehearsal, something always transpired. What John and I discovered in the studio became the anchor for performance and also the form that gave liberty to my expression.

Working on *Flesh and a Broken Whisper* helped me to know that every moment in a dance is a universe and as an interpreter, I can inhabit the dance in a way that attends the vision of the work and also reveals the unpredictability of live art. This integration makes each gesture so full and sometimes so achingly empty. It's a beautiful dichotomy, one that throughout 26 years in the field, continues to inspire my practice.

Through my collaboration with John, I learned that movement has an

exquisite logic of its own and that art has an intelligence that tells it's own abstract story. As long as we transit from one imperceptible moment to the other with all our attention and with an intent that is true to the work, then we are carried by the dance and in this way can share with audiences, an authentic experience. The art is in the doing.

A Reflection on *Flesh and a Broken Whisper* by Justine Comfort

Thinking back and looking at my notes, here are some thoughts/images that stuck with me and influenced my performance a great deal.

The very beginning-before even going on stage imagining being caught in the middle of something. This was difficult to find at first as I am standing still backstage-how was I supposed to feel as though the audience caught me in the middle? After I found it-it became one of my favourite moments. Imagining where I may be coming from, what I was doing-I could eventually make myself feel as though I had actually been moving.

The pacing animal (I have a thing for cheetahs so I imagined a cheetah being preyed on-I remember you saying stressing but not screaming.. like a cheetah trying to find an escape).

The tactile images were hugely informative and influential-the moss, leaves crackling, licks-licking the floor/my shins*, ribs being pulled and spilling out*** (I could clearly see and feel this every time, each time slightly different)- things that I could not only see but feel and hear added another layer to my performance and intention. Each night I tried to create my own world and these images made it possible because I could see and feel everything in it.

Feeling powerful but frail. Not exactly an image but it stuck with me the whole process and I very much connected to it. As a performer it is easy to feel a vulnerability on stage, particularly in a solo. The thought of a being both powerful and frail allowed me to accept and acknowledge that inevitable vulnerability, and perhaps take power in it? Thus finding my strength to perform

this emotionally and physically exhausting piece. It made my performance feel real and genuine. I felt powerful and frail at different points in the piece and that fueled my emotion, intention and physicality. It also brought out the sensuality we spoke of.

The satellite dances evolved for me over time beginning as the satellites then turning into something a bit closer to animal antennae extending from my fingers, ears and head. All of them listening.